Problems of Communism

Essay-Reviews

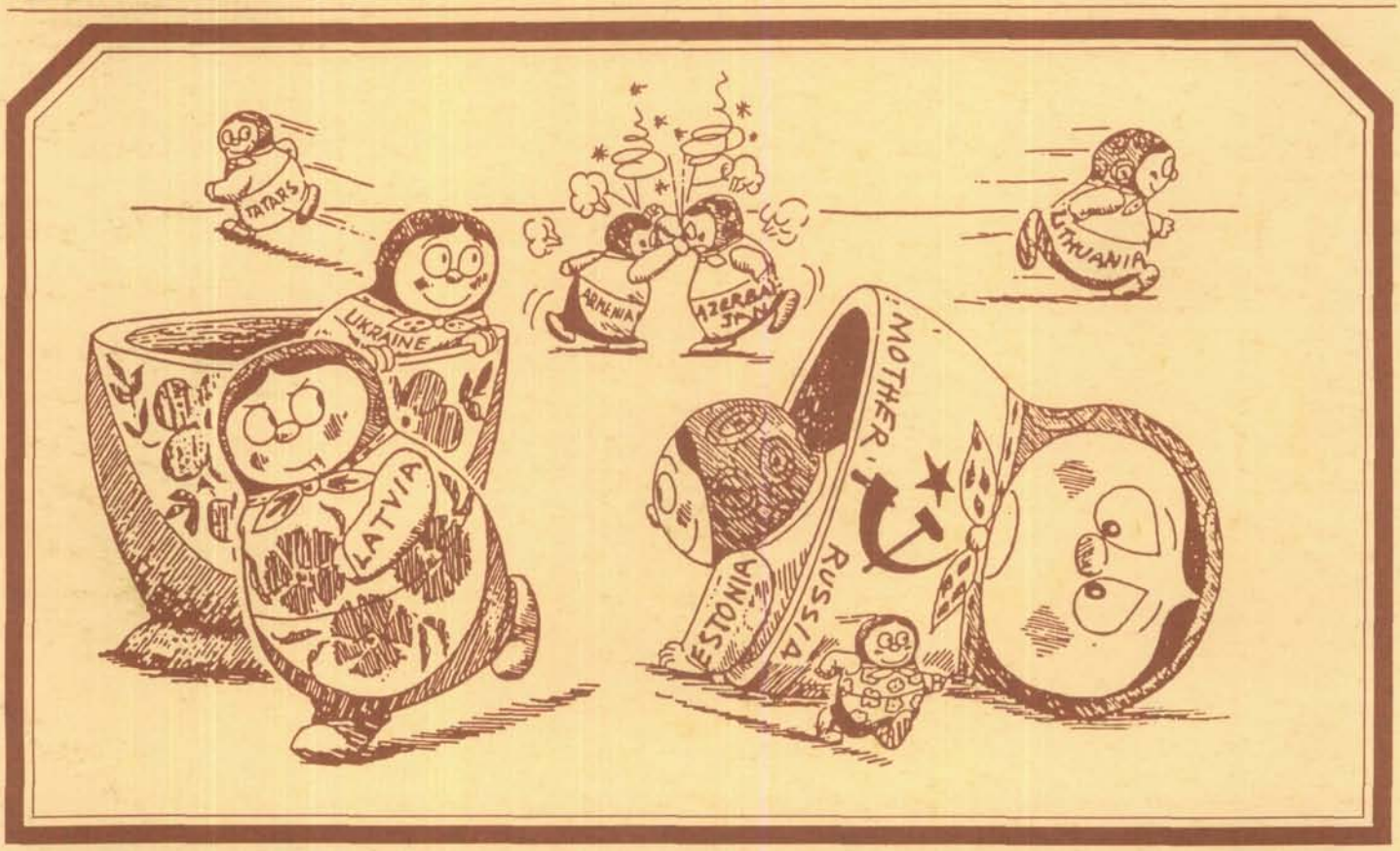
Shahrough Akhavi

William Fierman

Joan Neuberger

Jaroslaw Bilocerkowycz

JULY-AUGUST 1989



Soviet Ethnic Politics
Paul Goble

Lithuanian National Politics
V. Stanley Vardys

Dilemmas of Russian Nationalism
Roman Szporluk

Latvian National Rebirth
Juris Dreifelds

Belorussian Reawakening
Jan Zaprudnik

Gorbachev and Russian Orthodoxy
John B. Dunlop

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Problems of Communism

4

JULY-AUGUST 1989 VOL XXXVIII

Problems of Communism (ISSN 0032-941x) is a bimonthly publication providing analyses and significant information about the contemporary affairs of the Soviet Union, China, and comparable states and political movements. Views of contributors, as well as geographic boundaries and names, do not necessarily reflect the policies of the United States Government.

On all editorial matters, communications should be addressed to: The Editors, *Problems of Communism*, US Information Agency, United States of America, 301 4th Street SW, Washington, DC, 20547, USA. Telephone (202) 485-2230.

On subscriptions, communications should be addressed to: The Superintendent of Documents, US Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 20402, USA, preferably using the subscription form provided at the back of this issue. Outside the United States, please address inquiries to the Public Affairs Section, Embassy of the United States of America.

Copyright: Reproduction or republication of texts from *Problems of Communism* is permissible, and no claim of copyright is asserted. However, the Editors request that they be advised of reprint usage and that source credit be given both to the authors of individual articles and to *Problems of Communism*. Should textual items in the journal ever be subject to a claim of copyright, such claim will be clearly stated. Graphics and pictures which carry a credit line are not necessarily owned by *Problems of Communism*, and users bear responsibility for obtaining appropriate permissions.

An annual index for *Problems of Communism* appears in the November-December issue (No. 6) of each year except in the case of the first three volumes, which are covered in a combined index in the November-December issue (No. 6) of Vol. III. Material from the journal is also indexed in *ABC POL SCI, Bibliographie Internationale des Sciences Sociales (all Sections), Current Contents, Economic Abstracts, Historical Abstracts, Index to US Government Periodicals, International Political Science Abstracts, Public Affairs Information Service, Social Sciences Citation Index, Social Sciences Index, Strategic Studies Reference Guide,* and *United States Political Science Documents.*

1 Ethnic Politics in the USSR
by Paul Goble

15 Dilemmas of Russian Nationalism
Roman Szporluk

36 Belorussian Reawakening
by Jan Zaprudnik

53 Lithuanian National Politics
by V. Stanley Vardys

77 Latvian National Rebirth
by Juris Dreifelds

96 Gorbachev and Russian Orthodoxy
by John B. Dunlop

BOOKS

117 Islamic Radicalism
by Shahrough Akhavi

123 Religion and Nationalism in Soviet Central Asia
by William Fierman

128 Urbanization and the Origins of Ethnic Unrest in Imperial Russia
by Joan Neuberger

133 Focusing On the Ukrainian Famine of 1932–33
by Jaroslaw Bilocerkowycz

COVER: Adapted from cartoon by Zehentmayr, *Kurier* (Vienna).

EDITOR
Wayne Hall

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Sophia Sluzar

MANAGING EDITOR
Maria O. Pryshlak

ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Susan Williams O'Sullivan
Stephen R. Burant

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR
Sylvia Scott

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Angela L. Campbell

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IN THIS ISSUE OF

Problems of Communism

Articles

Ethnic Politics in the USSR

Paul Goble

Unlike in the past when the national question had been declared solved once and for all, Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost'* and reduction of coercion, his participatory leadership style and his concern with efficiency in promoting *perestroyka* have allowed the development of what can be termed ethnic politics in the USSR. The principal players are the central apparatus in Moscow, the Russians, both in the RSFSR and in the non-Russian republics, and the non-Russian nations. Each operates with different resources and under different constraints to promote its interests. Thus, a once static situation has become dynamic, potentially explosive, but perhaps ultimately manageable.

Dilemmas of Russian Nationalism

Roman Szporluk

Amidst the growing assertiveness of the non-Russian nations in the Soviet Union against the centralized command-administrative system, the Russian nation must decide whether to continue identifying itself with Soviet imperial power or to seek to develop its national identity in a Russian homeland, the RSFSR. Although the "imperial" mentality still predominates among Russians, a growing number of them is demanding that the RSFSR be allowed to establish a complete set of institutions separate from those of the USSR, and even have a separate capital. The relationship between the Russian people and the Soviet state can be termed the central national problem in the USSR today, not least because the agenda of the non-Russians is largely determined by their perception of the position of the Russians in the Soviet polity.

Belorussian Reawakening

Jan Zaprudnik

Since the advent of reform efforts in the Soviet Union, a national movement of intellectuals and young people has emerged in the republic of Belorussia. This movement has pressed for publicizing the truth about the Stalinist terror in the republic and about efforts of the regime to Russify Belorussia. The national movement has sought to persuade the republic's authorities to implement policies promoting the Belorussian language and culture, although more radical political demands have also been advanced. Moscow has lent some support to the independent groups. The republic party and government have strongly resisted the demands of the national movement, although recently they have made some concessions in the cultural sphere.

Lithuanian National Politics

V. Stanley Vardys

Glasnost' in the Soviet Union has permitted the rise of the Lithuanian Reform Movement (*Sąjūdis*), as well as smaller independent groups promoting radical changes in Lithuania. Initially close to the Gorbachev program of *perestroyka*, the *Sąjūdis* agenda has, in reaction to resistance by republic authorities, moved to advocate Lithuania's complete independence from the USSR. *Sąjūdis*'s massive success spurred a counter-movement of the republic's Russians and Poles seeking to stem the tide of nationalism and reform. However, after a resounding electoral defeat in the March 1989 elections, the Communist Party of Lithuania itself has begun to promote Lithuanian autonomy and has even promised to work for Lithuania's independence, although not at the rapid pace advocated by *Sąjūdis*.

(Abstracts continued on reverse side)

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Latvian National Rebirth

Juris Dreifelds

Latvians are currently undergoing a reawakening that has become particularly intense because of fears for national survival. Numerous independent societies, movements, and groups have sprung up and been united in the Latvian People's Front. Recently, the Front has begun to talk of an independent Latvia based on the rule of law and equal rights for all national, social, and religious groups. Generally, Latvians have been less daring than their Baltic neighbors in advocating sovereignty, partly for demographic reasons, and partly to avoid endangering recent gains.

Gorbachev and Russian Orthodoxy

John B. Dunlop

Under Gorbachev, the Soviet leadership has replaced the aggressively anti-religious policies of the past with a more subtle approach designed to mobilize believers in support of *perestroyka*. Efforts have been made to end the most blatant forms of discrimination against believers. The Russian Orthodox Church has been praised by state leaders for its patriotic efforts on behalf of world peace, and the Church's potential for engaging in charitable work is being explored. While the submissive Orthodox hierarchy has welcomed these changes, laymen and the lower clergy continue to object to the state's meddling with what they consider the internal affairs of the Church.

Essay-Reviews

Islamic Radicalism

Shahrough Akhavi

Although Islamic radicals have not achieved power, except in Iran, Islamic radicalism has come to define the political agenda in a number of countries throughout the Middle East. Islamic radicals seek to use all means to reconcile theory and practice in Islam and to implement the *Shar'iah*. Thus, they make no distinctions between religion and politics. Rather unexpectedly, Islamic radicals tend to be highly educated specialists in science and technology, thus confounding modernization theory, which predicts that such specialists are likely to be the bearers of Western-style modernity.

Religion and Nationalism in Soviet Central Asia

William Fierman

Recent works on Soviet Islam and the Muslim nationalities differ over the role of unofficial Islam and the degree of unity among the Muslim peoples of the USSR. But the works agree on the strength of Islam in the Soviet Union and on the ties between Islam and national identity. Islam may yet threaten the integrity of the USSR because it is a vital component of Muslim identity and a potential rallying point for Muslims who may be prompted to action by economic and social concerns.

Urbanization and the Origins of Ethnic Unrest in Imperial Russia

Joan Neuberger

The sources of nationality conflict in the Soviet Union lie in the urban history of Russia in the decades immediately preceding the Bolshevik Revolution. Ethnic tensions began to mount in the late 19th century as a consequence of the social and economic conflicts that accompanied urbanization and modernization. But ethnic tension also exacerbated these conflicts. Local ethnic groups fought each other and the central Russian state, which was also seen as an outsider. This ethnic tension ultimately contributed to the disintegration of the Russian empire and represents an ominous legacy to the multi-ethnic Soviet Union.

Focusing On the Ukrainian Famine of 1932–33

Jaroslaw Bilocerkowycz

A tragedy involving the loss of millions of lives, the Ukrainian famine of 1932–33, has until recently received little attention. New works on the famine have done much to correct this situation. The authors of these books generally agree that the famine was part of Stalin's nationality policy, that he deliberately used it to subordinate the nationally conscious strata of Ukrainian society—the peasantry, intelligentsia, and prominent communist leaders. The authors attribute the West's ignorance of the tragedy to biased media coverage and to attempts by government officials to downplay the tragedy for the sake of good relations with Stalin's Soviet Union.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ethnic Politics in the USSR

Paul Goble

The rising tide of national activism in the Soviet Union has led many in Moscow and in the West to draw apocalyptic conclusions. Some have seen the upsurge of unrest as heralding the end of the Soviet empire; others view it as pointing to the end of *perestroyka* and the eventual ouster of its author. Although these judgments may ultimately prove prophetic, the current preoccupation with them has detracted attention from a more immediate and interesting development—the demise of the "national question" as traditionally understood in the USSR and the emergence of a distinctly Soviet brand of ethnic politics.

Even now, the use of the term "ethnic politics" in speaking of the Soviet system has a strange ring to it. Until very recently, ethnic issues in the USSR were discussed in terms of the "national question," an ideologically charged concept that set strict limits on what could be discussed and usually precluded the open acknowledgment of real problems. Combined with Moscow's virtual monopoly on political resources, this meant that the various national entities of the Soviet Union had neither the sanction nor the resources to engage in ethnic politics in any meaningful way.[1] Moscow made decisions "behind closed doors" on the basis of its own calculations, carefully concealed any controversy, and used its overwhelming political, economic, and coercive clout to impose its will on the periphery.[2] Under Mikhail Gorbachev, this has begun to change. While Moscow still maintains that the "national question" in a narrow sense has been solved, it no longer observes many of the taboos that this ideological principle had imposed. Soviet leaders from Gorbachev on down now routinely acknowledge the existence of serious ethnic problems and, particularly important here, that the groups directly involved should participate in the resolution of these problems. And as the intended or unintended consequence of his policies, Gorbachev has overseen the devolution of certain kinds of political resources from Moscow to the periphery. As a result, at least some national groups now have both the sanction and the resources to engage in political activity, even though Moscow continues to have the upper hand.

In this essay, I wish to explore the outlines of this new phenomenon in the Soviet Union. To do so, I would like to suggest some preliminary answers to three major questions:

- How have Gorbachev's policies transformed the situation, allowing what had been unthinkable just a few years ago to take place on a regular basis?
- What are the resources of and constraints on the major participants, and what strategies has each of them employed to advance its interests in the new environment?
- What forces in the Soviet system tend to buttress the emerging system of ethnic politics, what forces work against it, and how are these likely to play out over the next year?

By so doing, I hope to show that the changes in the Soviet system that have made the new ethnic activism possible may provide the basis for an evolution of the Soviet system in a direction that avoids the two apocalypses mentioned above.

[1]Complex ethnic politics were played earlier, but generally this happened behind the scenes and more often at the local than the all-Union level. For a remarkable description of just how rough such politics often were, see M. A. Gasparyan, "Neither a Persian Yoke, nor an Arab Sheikhdom, nor a Turkish Yataghan," *Russkaya Mysl'* (Paris) May 20, 1988, p. 7.

[2]The quote and a description of the transformation under Gorbachev is found in Algis Prazauskas, "'Why Nations Rebel? . . .'," *Druzhba Narodov* (Moscow), No. 8, 1988, pp. 207–08.

Paul Goble is Special Assistant for Soviet Nationalities in the US Department of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research. The views expressed in this article are his own and not necessarily those of the Department or the US Government.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Changing the Rules of the Game

As one Soviet specialist on ethnic relations has observed, Gorbachev could have begun *perestroyka* in the area of nationality relations but chose instead to launch it in the economic and political spheres.[3] This is hardly surprising: Gorbachev had little experience or expertise on nationality questions before coming to power, and many of those who currently surround him in the Soviet leadership also lack a background in this area. Had Gorbachev and others in the leadership been more aware of the implications of the country's ethnic mosaic for reform and vice versa, they might not have been willing to take the policy risks needed to shake the system. But precisely because Gorbachev did not focus on nationality issues and did not articulate a specific nationality policy as his predecessors had invariably done, the impact of his other policies on the county's various ethnic communities has been all the greater.[4]

Gorbachev's three main domestic policy thrusts—the reduction of coercion and promotion of *glasnost'*, his presidential and participatory style of leadership, and his overriding concern with efficiency and generally anti-ideological stance—all have had significant implications for ethnic politics.

Gorbachev's reduction of the level of coercion in Soviet society and his "new thinking" in foreign policy, which removes much of the justification for coercion, has contributed to an explosion in public activism throughout the Soviet Union and to a dramatic change in the relationship of republic elites to Moscow and to their respective populations. The frequency with which demonstrations are staged provides a good example. Prior to Gorbachev, few people were willing to engage in public protests, because the risks were high and certain and the chances of reward virtually nil. Between 1956 and 1985, there was on average one demonstration in the USSR every 18 days: most had fewer than a dozen participants, and focused on elite concerns such as human rights issues. Since Gorbachev came to power, much has changed; the risks of participating in demonstrations have declined and the chances of achieving one's demands have gone up dramatically as Moscow and republic leaderships have proved willing to negotiate with demonstrators. Now, there is approximately one demonstration every three days in the USSR, and its average size is in the thousands.[5] More important, however, is the fact that an ever-increasing share of these demonstrations are nationality-related—reflecting the nationality basis of the system, the strength of ethnic identities, and the relative weakness of other collective identities and ties because of past Soviet policies.

Even more significant is the change in the relationship of republic leaders to Moscow and to their own populations. In the environment of high coercion before Gorbachev, republic leaders were more dependent on and responsive to those above them than to those below them. Moscow could remove republic leaders with impunity, and those below them could be coerced into obedience. This meant that Moscow could rely on republic elites to act as its proconsuls, imposing its policies and deflecting popular anger away from the center. That has changed. In the words of one writer, "The apparatus that was able to command must now learn how to convince."[6] To be effective, republic leaders must now increasingly heed the views of those below them and hence may be ever less responsive to those above. One example is Gennadiy Kolbin, the ethnic Russian whose appointment as Kazakhstan's party chief in December 1986 sparked a major Kazakh protest. While holding this post, he became more Kazakh than his Kazakh predecessor, advancing republic interests far more forcefully than Dinmukhammad Kunayev ever did. He defended his republic against criticism from the center and presented himself as an expert on the ethnic problems of the Kazakhs and the large German minority in Kazakhstan.[7] Or take the case of Moscow trying to impose order in Armenia and Azerbaijan by a change in republic leadership. In each republic, Moscow's new man soon began to articulate many of the same themes for which his predecessor had been let go. Had either leader failed to do so, he would have been rendered ineffective. This change in the relationship between republic leaders and Moscow has affected even conservative Brezhnev-era holdovers like Ukraine's Volodymyr Shcherbytskyi and Moldavia's Semen Grossu, both of whom have had to go along with at least some national aspirations in order to exercise effective rule.

---

[3]Galina Starovoytova in a roundtable discussion entitled "Democracy is Conflict" in *Vek XX i Mir* (Moscow), No. 12, 1988, p. 8.

[4]See Paul Goble, "Gorbachev and the Soviet Nationality Problem," in M. Friedberg and H. Isham, Eds., *Soviet Society Under Gorbachev*, Armonk, NY, M. E. Sharpe, 1987, pp. 76–100. Cf. Ann Sheehy, "Non-Russian Representation in the Politburo and Secretariat," Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty Research (hereafter—RFE-RL), *Radio Liberty Research* (Munich), RL 439/87, Oct. 20, 1987, and "Upping Russian Representation in Soviet Parliament," ibid., RL 474/88, Oct. 31, 1988.

[5]These calculations are based on Ludmilla Alekseyeva, "Mass Unrest in the USSR,"unpublished manuscript, 1987; and reports in the *samizdat* journals *Ekspress-Khronika* and *Glasnost'*. The latter are now conveniently summarized on a weekly basis in the Paris *Russkaya Mysl'*.

[6]*Rigas Balss* (Riga), Oct. 4, 1988.

[7]See Gennadiy Kolbin's remarks in *Izvestiya* (Moscow), June 24, 1988, and in *Freundschaft* (Tselinograd), July 5, 1988.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This development was apparently unforeseen by Gorbachev. Yet, it carries major ramifications. In addition to signifying that the republic leaderships will increasingly line up with their respective populations, it has the potential to heighten ethnic tensions through the lack of a native executor of Moscow's will. It also reduces Moscow's options for coping with a situation that threatens to get out of control. Indeed, Moscow's decision to impose martial law on much of Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1988 reflected this change as much as it represented a response to the demonstrations, strikes, and communal violence that preceded the decision.

At the same time as coercion has been reduced, Gorbachev has sponsored *glasnost'*—the more open discussion of virtually all issues. By calling attention to past and present problems, this policy has both angered the population and accentuated national differences and conflicts. It is simply not true that Soviet citizens knew about all the things that have been brought out by *glasnost'* but simply could not voice their knowledge; most of them probably had no idea of the scale or even the existence of certain events and developments. Moreover, there is virtually no event in Soviet history whose discussion does not increase national divisions. Collectivization, for example, looks very different in Ukraine and Kazakhstan—where millions died as a direct result of it—than in Moscow, where Russian workers were guaranteed some food through rations. Even the Great Patriotic War, which Moscow views as the best proof of the Soviet Union's unity, divides the people of the Baltic republics—who lost their independence as the result of the Hitler-Stalin Pact—from those who remember the war as a singular achievement.

An organizational feature of the Soviet press is relevant here. To a large extent, it is structured along ethnolinguistic and ethno-territorial lines rather than functional ones. As a result, the press tends to provide each national group with what can only be described as a national perspective on events. And in this way, the press often becomes a stimulus of national activism by providing details on demonstrations and their often successful consequences. The Kazakh press, for example, noted that fewer dismissals of Kazakh officials took place in Alma-Ata following the December 1986 demonstrations than of officials in neighboring republics, where there had been no demonstrations.[8]

Gorbachev's second main decision—to adopt a presidential style and support mass participation—reflects both his weakness in many of the party and state bureaucracies and his own sense of himself as a Soviet man who can make successful appeals to the population as Soviet citizens above all else. His frequent public expressions of impatience with manifestations of non-Russian ethnicity reflects that attitude. His anti-bureaucratic approach has two major consequences. First, it has weakened some central ministries and their party committee branch departments, thus allowing greater scope for independent action by republic leaderships. For example, the republics quickly moved into the foreign trade arena following the dismemberment of the old Ministry of Foreign Trade in Moscow. And second, his attack on republic bureaucracies and the resultant cuts of up to 50 percent in some republic ministry and party organization personnel have angered many.[9] Some of those dismissed have not been able to make an easy transition, and it is not unlikely that at least a few are now applying their political and bureaucratic skills to help ethnic activists work against the system.

Gorbachev's desire to avoid anything that might call his democratization program into question or offend key constituencies in Moscow and abroad, plus his desire to mobilize the population against bureaucratic constraints, has also had significant consequences for ethnic groups. First, it has led him to support virtually all forms of popular activism at least initially, even when a more sober assessment might have suggested another course of action. This has encouraged ever more groups to take up various causes. Second, because various national groups—such as the Armenians and the Baltic nationalities—have been able to count on some restraint on the part of the center, they have often gone further than Moscow could ultimately tolerate and have had to be reined in sharply later. This has led to a situation in the republics where everyone is uncertain about just what will happen next.

While Gorbachev has not been very effective at setting limits, he has had the good fortune to have some colleagues who are. And as will be seen below, this fact may help to constrain the centrifugal forces that he appears to have set loose. At the same time, some of his political reforms may have the effect of isolating extremists. In Leningrad, for example, a Russian nationalist candidate of *Pamyat'* suffered a serious defeat in a working-class Russian constituency that might have been expected to support him, precisely because he was not equipped to make the pledges of constituency service that the winners did.[10] And in the Baltic repub-

[8]Kolbin implied this in *Izvestiya*, Aug. 24, 1988. See also *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* (Alma-Ata), 1987–88, passim.

[9]TASS (Moscow), Feb. 21, 1988; and Dzintra Bungs, "Restructuring the Republic Government: The First Phase," RFE-RL, *Radio Free Europe Research* (Munich), Baltic Area Situation Report, SR/5/88, May 20, 1988.

[10]*Leningradskaya Pravda* (Leningrad), Feb. 2, 1989. I am indebted to Blair Ruble for calling this article to my attention.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lics, the people's fronts' candidates are generally more moderate and even cautious than their supporters.

The third major thrust of Gorbachev's policy package is his promotion of efficiency and an essentially anti-ideological stance. Gorbachev's approach necessarily works against some, if not all, demands of non-Russians. For example, he has undercut the affirmative-action programs in the republics, on the grounds that they are inefficient and a form of "reverse discrimination."[11] He has attacked, even killed, major "gigantist" projects like the Siberian river diversion. While these projects were opposed by Russians and would have been extremely expensive, they would have constituted major interregional, and hence interethnic, transfers of resources. And his support for some sort of republic *khozrashchet* (self-financing) is at least partially intended to make every republic pay its own way. If this policy were ever to be implemented, it would create a vast new number of winners and losers, and this would, in turn, result in protests of various kinds.

While Gorbachev is clearly a committed Marxist-Leninist, his attacks on Marxist-Leninist theory and on much of Soviet history as well as his generally technocratic approach have called into question the legitimating principle of the multinational Soviet state and opened the door to various choices and activism that ideology heretofore had proscribed.[12] Besides legitimating the USSR, Marxist-Leninism served to curb non-Russian nationalism and many forms of Russian assertiveness. To the extent that the constraints inherent in Marxism-Leninism are lowered or removed, both Russians and non-Russians are likely to become more active, to explore their unique pasts, and to engage in activities that will exacerbate interethnic tensions. In the absence of institutional protections, the smaller ethnic groups will tend to suffer disproportionately more at the hands of the more numerous and now less constrained Russians. Such a development could additionally delegitimate the regime for the non-Russians and might force a return to a more repressive and Russian-nationalist rule.

[11]Leokadiya Drobizheva used this term to criticize past Soviet practices and to urge a "nationality-blind" approach to hiring and administration. See *Moscow News*, May 31, 1987.

[12]See Yuriy Feofanov's assertion that "no one seems to question the precision of the accusation about a 'collapse of ideology'," in ibid., June 18–25, 1989, p. 3; Valentina Khardeva-Alekseyeva, "Toiling Youth in Conditions of Economic Reform," *Obshchestvennyye Nauki* (Moscow), No. 3, 1989, pp. 206–14; and especially Vladimir Shubkin, "A Difficult Farewell," *Novyy Mir* (Moscow), No. 4, 1989, pp. 165–84.

On the import of this change, see Bohdan Nahaylo, "Change in Russian Views on the Nationality Problem?" *Radio Liberty Research*, RL 456/88, Oct. 2, 1988; and Paul Goble, "Can Anyone Solve the Soviet Nationality Problem," talk at the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, The Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington, DC, January 23, 1989.

At the same time, the reduction of the importance of Marxist-Leninist ideology has had several positive consequences in both official and unofficial realms. Officially, it has allowed the regime to explore a far broader range of options to cope with its problems.[13] Thus, for example, Moscow copied India's practice of seizing direct control of ethnically troubled regions when it imposed direct rule from Moscow on Nagorno-Karabakh in January 1989. And it has encouraged officials to risk experimenting with various kinds of ethnic organization that they otherwise might have rejected, such as allowing the hitherto ideologically suspect application of extraterritorial cultural autonomy, a policy that could give groups living outside their home area some native-language institutions. Outside the official realm, the benefits have been far greater. All ethnic groups have been able to explore aspects of their history and identity that had formerly been completely out of bounds—such as religion—and to articulate new ideas on the basis of sources that Marxism-Leninism would have declared beyond the pale.

Taken together, these three thrusts have launched but not yet institutionalized a new system, one that can be described as a form of ethnic politics. Gorbachev's general approach has provided various non-Russian groups with important political resources of a distinctive but important kind—primarily in the information area—and the sanction to engage in political negotiations on a variety of levels. Moreover, his tolerance for the expression of divergent views has meant that many old issues have been allowed to surface and to mobilize larger portions of the population. And his policies themselves have created new winners and losers, many of whom clearly believe that they must act quickly before it is too late to defend or oppose the new situation.

Playing the Game

The variety of ethnic communities that have responded to these changes is exceeded by the diversity of their responses. Virtually all of the USSR's more than 100 nationalities have become political actors who resort to various tactics ranging from strikes and demonstrations, to constitutional argument and elections, to behind-the-scenes maneuvering. Any simple enumeration of all these actions would almost certainly hide the forest in the trees, and any imposition of a single analytic framework would necessarily oversimplify a complex

[13]See the outline for future Soviet research on domestic and foreign ethnic problems in *Voprosy Istorii* (Moscow), No. 9, 1987, pp. 97–118, and the sources cited therein.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and fluid situation.[14] In order to avoid these particular problems, I have adopted a structural-functionalist approach, one that seeks to identify the major underlying patterns without making any claim to absolute comprehensiveness. As a first step, I want to examine the ways in which Gorbachev's reforms have transformed the specific characteristics of the three major players: non-Russians, Russians, and Moscow—into political resources and constraints and then to consider the special strategies each has adopted to pursue its goals.

Before doing that, however, I want to make three general observations about this approach lest I be misunderstood. First, while each of these three players occupies a distinct functional position in the system, none is internally homogeneous. Each has opponents within its own group and allies in the other two, and the resultant cross-cutting allegiances have allowed the current system to emerge. For example, many non-Russian literary elites line up with Gorbachev even as conservative republic party leaders ally themselves with Moscow conservatives,[15] and reformers in non-Russian areas may look to Russian reformers even to the point of being willing to accept the imposition of an Estonian "Kolbin."[16] Nonetheless, considering each group separately in functional terms remains a useful approach because it helps us to understand the current pattern of ethnic politics in the USSR and to predict its future course of development.

Second, ethnic politics, as I have said, requires some distribution of political resources, but this distribution need not be equal or fixed. In the Soviet Union, it is neither. Moscow's position remains supreme, and its leaders could end the current game of ethnic politics at any time. This indisputable fact clearly limits Soviet ethnic politics. However, Moscow's reluctance to end the game because of the enormous political costs at home and abroad provides a basis—albeit a still fragile one—for participation by the other groups. And just as this ethnic politics has emerged over the last several years, so too can it be expected to evolve, expanding or contracting in turns, in the future. In such a situation, all participants will regularly test the limits of the permissible, mistakes will occur, and explosions that could break the system remain possible.

Third, ethnic politics takes many forms, with any given player often practicing several forms at once. Prior to Gorbachev, ethnic elites did press for change, but because they generally had to act behind the scenes and had few resources beyond personal ties, their efforts were seldom effective. Now that they can "go public," mobilizing support in the streets as it were, there is a risk that only their public face will be noticed and that their other forms of political activity will be ignored or downplayed. This has already led to some serious misunderstandings by both participants and observers. A recent case in point: in February 1989, the Lithuanian Restructuring Movement, *Sąjūdis,* issued a dramatic call for independence and then shortly thereafter withdrew its candidates from races against the republic's top leaders, virtually guaranteeing the election of the latter. One way to read these events is to see the call as genuine and the subsequent withdrawal simply as the result of pressure from Moscow. However, a more fruitful and accurate way to view them is as a part of a complex negotiating situation in which the *Sąjūdis* elite first moved to hold its political base and then made a concession in the interests of both its future influence on republic leaders and its desire to reduce further the role of Moscow in the situation. Keeping track of several balls in the air at the same time is not an easy task for either players or observers, but that is precisely what makes the new ethnic politics in the USSR so intriguing.

The Non-Russians

The most fragmented of the three major players is the non-Russian half of the Soviet population which embraces more than 100 nationalities, each with its own internal subdivisions, characteristics, and goals. Despite this, all share certain fundamental functional statuses and thus can be usefully considered as an entity.

The extent of political activism by particular nationalities is often explained by the specific characteristics of the group involved. Thus, Estonians are active because their small numbers pose fewer problems for Moscow, their political culture inclines them to public participation especially now that coercion has declined, and their local elites have been less tightly supervised than some others and hence are more ready to articulate national demands and mobilize the population. Ukrainians, on the other hand, are seen as less active. Their

[14]Among the best Soviet discussions of this diversity are M. Guboglo, "Internationalist Upbringing: Achievements and Pressing Problems," *Kommunist Moldavii* (Kishinev), No. 11, 1987, pp. 45–53; P. I. Goryayev, "On the Reasons for National Manifestations in Soviet Society," *Nauchnyy Kommunizm* (Moscow), No. 9, 1988, pp. 40–46; G. Pyadukhov, "Inter-National Relations: Toward an Analysis of the Reasons for Individual Negative Phenomena," *Kommunist Kirgizii* (Frunze), No. 12, 1988, pp. 27–32; and Yu. Bromley, "National Problems under Restructuring," *Voprosy Istorii,* No. 1, 1989, pp. 24–41.

[15]The possibility of such a "vendée" was first raised in *Komsomol'skaya Pravda* (Moscow), June 17, 1988. Since then, it has been raised many times.

[16]This possibility was raised by Edgar Savisaar, the head of the Estonian People's Front. Writing in the December 1987 issue of *Raduga* (Tallinn), p. 56, he concluded that radical change may require outsiders not locked into the old ways by local ties. In short, even Estonia might need a "Kolbin" (who replaced Kunayev in Kazakhstan in December 1986) to get things moving.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

relative quiescence so far is explained by Moscow's insistence on a tighter grip on this largest non-Russian group, the absence of a strong participatory streak in Ukrainian political culture, greater restrictions on alternative elites as well as the greater organizational difficulties in reaching out to a much larger republic.[17] Such explanations are useful, but even more important, they point to a more general approach, one that considers these basic factors across the entire spectrum of non-Russian groups.[18] Such an approach has greater explanatory and predictive power and will be used here. Specifically, I will examine five characteristics of non-Russian ethnic communities in the USSR—size (both absolute and relative), institutional completeness, political culture, distinctive problems and goals, and the ability to form alliances via the media and in other ways—showing in each case how the characteristic functioned as a resource and constraint before Gorbachev and how it works now.

Size. The non-Russian nationalities range widely in size, and this factor alone has profound political consequences. A dozen peoples claim fewer than 2,000 members, while the Ukrainians number nearly 50 million. Both before Gorbachev and now, the larger nationalities have tended to do better in closed politics, where their official elites can bargain from a position of strength without appearing to threaten the system. These elites are less well-equipped to participate in more open politics both because Moscow keeps a close watch on them and because they need to maintain tight control over alternative elites lest the latter frighten the center. Conversely, smaller nationalities have done less well in closed politics but have been more successful in open activism. Behind closed doors, their official elites have had little to bargain with, but because both Moscow and the Russians are less fearful of their activism, both official and unofficial elites have the opportunity and incentive to employ newly available forms of protest.

Relative size is important in three other respects. First, most ethnic politics in the USSR takes place not between one national group and Moscow but among the various non-Russian groups. While size does not determine who will win, it often helps groups to find allies or to simply overwhelm their opponents. Second, within a given area, a nationality small on the all-Union scale may be dominant and within limits behave more like a majority than a minority group. An example of the former is the on-going clash between Uzbeks and Tajiks in Central Asia; of the latter, the behavior of titular nationalities in the Baltic states. As will be seen below, a corollary of this is that from a functional perspective, Russian minorities in non-Russian areas can be expected to take on the characteristics of a minority both ideologically and institutionally. Thus, Russians in Estonia make their claims as a threatened minority and have organized for political action just like non-Russians in other republics. And third, the larger the nationality involved, the more credible—and more threatening to Moscow—are demands for national autonomy or secession.

Institutional completeness. This factor has both an official and an unofficial aspect, each of which can function as a resource or constraint depending on specific conditions. Prior to Gorbachev, official recognition in the form of an ethnic territory meant that the nationality involved would at least nominally have officials who could push its interests behind the scenes. In practice, however, it also meant that these officials blocked direct participation by nationalities and could be counted on to try to keep any counter-elites in their place. As a result, in the past, some groups without their own republics, such as the Jews and the Crimean Tatars, were in a better position to advance distinctly national demands than groups that had republics.

Now, this has changed.[19] Republic elites have had to seek a rapprochement with the dominant nationality in their charge and to represent its concerns precisely because in most cases they cannot apply the kind of coercion they regularly had applied in the past. Moreover, these elites may even see popular activism as a useful adjunct to their own efforts to survive in office, as was the case with the official organization of the Alma-Ata demonstrations in December 1986, or to advance a specific program with which they agree, such as appears to be the case now in Estonia. Consequently, republic status has become a much more valuable political resource, and it is no surprise that some nationalities lacking this status now want it, while others want their existing low-level status upgraded.

Equally important in evaluating how a group will ap-

[17]For a discussion of the impact of size in determining republic behavior, see Goble, "Readers, Writers and Republics: A Structural Approach to Non-Russian Literary Politics," in M. Beissinger and L. Hajda, Eds., *Soviet Nationality Problems under Gorbachev* (forthcoming).

[18]Ukraine represents an exception because of its overriding importance to the system. For useful discussions on this point, see Roman Solchanyk, "Lvov Authorities Begin Criminal Proceedings Against Ukrainian Activists," *Radio Liberty Research*, RL 327/88, July 26, 1988; Bohdan Nahaylo, "Lvov Authorities Resort to Old Methods in Breaking Up Unauthorized Meetings and Religious Services," ibid., RL 355/88, Aug. 13, 1988; and especially idem, "Vitalii Korotich on 'Undemocratic' Conditions in the Ukraine, on Sumgait and on *Pamyat'*," ibid., RL 400/88, Sept. 5, 1988.

[19]See Goble, "Gorbachev and the Soviet Nationality Problem," loc. cit.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

proach ethnic politics is the unofficial aspect of institutional completeness—whether or not cultural, economic, and other elites exist within a particular national community who can articulate its interests, provide credible alternatives, and mobilize the population. Most large republic nationalities have such elites, but many smaller ones do not. Under conditions of heavy coercion, this factor was relatively unimportant because the political role of such groups was extremely restricted; but now, many small groups have entered the political arena precisely to achieve that kind of institutional completeness. They see it as necessary for their continued national existence and for protection against Gorbachev's efficiency drive.

Political culture. Prior to Gorbachev, the authoritarianism of the state was supported by the often authoritarian political cultures of the most numerous national groups, both Russian and non-Russian; where this was absent, coercion made up the difference. Now, perhaps the greatest resource any ethnic group could have for playing ethnic politics, and the one that Gorbachev seeks to promote to achieve his broader aims, is a participatory political culture, one that approves activism, tolerates diversity, and is willing to live with complexity and uncertainty. However, virtually none of the nationalities except perhaps for the three small Baltic nations appears to have a fully participatory political culture at the mass level. Therefore, few will find it easy to mobilize the masses in the absence of the former level of coercion that provided the sticks, and in view of the poor performance of the economy, which might have provided the carrots. All this will change—and, recent developments suggest, it will take place more quickly than many had expected.

Problems and goals. Prior to Gorbachev, non-Russian groups were severely limited in their ability to engage in public discussion of their particular problems and were virtually precluded from setting forth goals different from the center's. This is not now the case, as the result of the decline in coercion, the loosening of ideological strictures, and the rise of a freer republic press under *glasnost'*. The range of problems and programs discussed is enormous, from the radical to the trivial, from Moscow-threatening to Moscow-supportive, from the vague to the extremely specific. While some republics share the same concerns and goals, the overlap is far from total, limiting the ability of these groups to form alliances and Moscow's ability to respond to them in a generalized and undifferentiated way.

The nature of individual national problems and goals has a profound impact on the ability of a group to participate in public political activism. Where, as in the Baltic states, the programs are generally simple and clear, mobilization is relatively easy despite the disapproval of many in Moscow. But in Central Asia, where the programs are complicated and seemingly counterintuitive (Central Asians need a stronger center not a weaker one to be able to achieve their aims), rallying the population is difficult, and the central authorities can use this situation to their advantage against the groups involved. No simple matrix is possible, and an open recognition of this very complexity provides a useful and necessary correction to the often-heard assumption that all non-Russian groups have the same ultimate objectives, that they are travelling along a single continuum to them, and that extrapolation from the most extreme groups today provides a reliable prediction of the behavior of others in the future.

Alliance formation and media access. These two closely-related factors have always been important; that is why Moscow has traditionally worked so hard to limit them. Even before Gorbachev, those groups that could easily form broader alliances—such as the Central Asia–Moscow construction industry tie to push for Siberian river diversion—have generally been more successful than those non-Russian groups that could not make such alliances; and those with attentive and important sympathizers abroad and/or regular access to the foreign media—such as the Jews, Germans, and Armenians—have enjoyed a protection and resource that others did not have. Under Gorbachev, a far larger number of groups have sought such alliances and attention and have used the more open Soviet media to assist their efforts.

This last point is especially important. The press in the non-Russian republics has changed dramatically over the last decade. Ten years ago, an Estonian typically learned about Ukrainian developments only very occasionally and only via channels in Moscow; now, his newspapers, like those in all other union and autonomous republics in the USSR, are likely to feature a daily column on developments in other republics and most of the news items are written by Estonian or Ukrainian journalists. As a result, each nationality knows far more about the others and can more easily find the bases for cooperation. Moreover, because any new policy or practice can be seen as a precedent and any differential treatment of republics seen as discrimination, this development also affects Moscow's ability to cope with the periphery. It is no accident that in 1987, when the Armenians launched their drive for the transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh to the jurisdiction of the Armenian republic, only about two dozen other nationalities

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thought of making similar territorial demands; now, that number is over 50 and likely to grow. And as the full extent of the Chernobyl' disaster finally leaked out, it is not surprising that activists in all republics with nuclear power plants stepped up their drives to shut them down.

Singly and in combination, these five factors affect which groups will participate in ethnic politics and how. They suggest that one of the most dramatic kinds of ethnic activism—mass demonstrations and general strikes—is likely to remain confined to the small Baltic republics and Armenia, which have a tradition of participatory culture, powerful attentive publics at home and abroad, and a major role to play in Gorbachev's campaign to change the Soviet Union and especially its image abroad. These factors also suggest that other groups are more likely to adopt other available strategies in the pursuit of their goals, strategies that better reflect their special conditions and promise greater results, or to decide to remain outside of ethnic politics as described here. Without any pretense at comprehensiveness, I would now like to review the five most interesting non-Russian strategies: demonstrations, organizational innovation, media manipulation, alliance formation, and capitalizing on opportunities available in the system. Finally, I would like to consider another strategy which is not really part of ethnic politics, but which may be an important limiting factor in the elaboration of these politics—namely, communal violence.

Demonstrations. The most visible aspect of this new politics—mass demonstrations—requires the least additional comment. Nevertheless, three observations appear to be in order to correct some misconceptions. First, mass demonstrations are not a particularly good barometer of either ethnic activism or ethnic influence. By themselves, they may even be a sign of a group's weakness, a confession that this is the only way to get attention. Sometimes a demonstration may help—witness the results the Crimean Tatars have achieved—and sometimes not. Moreover, for many groups lacking a participatory tradition, strikes or anomic violence—something Moscow may find far easier to control—may represent a functional equivalent. Consequently, a decline in the number and size of public demonstrations—which is likely in the Baltic republics during the next year—may not reflect a receding of ethnic mobilization or influence but rather its institutionalization. Indeed, if a group can act in other ways, demonstrations may simply be a useful adjunct or threat rather than the best way to proceed.

Second, demonstrations are almost never simply the manifestation of popular attitudes. Very often, an individual demonstration may reflect the efforts of more than one group and be directed to more than one end. The situation in the Caucasus in 1988 is a classic example. Various groups were seeking to use the demonstrations to protect their positions, advance *perestroyka,* or make demands for systemic change.[20] An even more obvious example of this competitive situation in organizing demonstrations was provided when Gorbachev visited Ukraine in February 1989.[21] Thus, it is a major mistake to assume that all demonstrations in a particular republic reflect only one point of view. Instead, they reflect mobilization efforts by various elites—Moscow, republic officials, Russians, and non-Russians.

And third, as has been indicated repeatedly above, demonstrations generally have appeared and will continue to appear where they support the policies of Moscow or republic elites—or can be presented as such—and will tend not to take place elsewhere. Because of Gorbachev's interest in Western Europe, the Baltic nationalities have and know they have far more leeway than other groups. This fact underscores an important point: given Gorbachev's program, attention by both Western media and Western governments has already played a key role in the rise of ethnic politics in the USSR and will likely continue to do so in the future.[22]

Media management. To a remarkable degree, Soviet control of the population before Gorbachev was based on control over information. Attempts by small elites to circumvent this system of control, via *samizdat* or other means, were never very successful because they could not reach large audiences. Now, given Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost',* and the economic incentive the media have to reach and hold an audience, that has begun to change. Widespread competition has emerged among key elites to reach the population, other republics, and Moscow, as well as foreign audiences. Although examples of this competition are numerous, I will discuss only three: the Baltic youth press, the competition between Armenians and Azeris in Moscow, and the use of Western reporters by Uzbeks.

---

[20]For more details, see the special reports of the US Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, "Crisis in the Caucasus," *Soviet Nationalities Survey* (Washington, DC). No. 15 (1988) and No. 16 (1989).

[21]The demonstrations by intellectuals in Kiev against Shcherbytskyi clearly enjoyed Moscow's backing; those in L'viv against the General Secretary represented a response by republic officials; and demonstrations in the run-up to the Congress of People's Deputies elections represented a protest against both.

[22]See Goble, "Gorbachev and the Challenge of Russian Nationalism," German-American Papers on the Gorbachev Reform Program, Washington, DC, Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, 1989, pp. 129–33.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Baltic republic Russian-language youth newspapers are the most radical papers in the Soviet Union and those most widely subscribed to outside their home areas. More than 100,000 people outside of Latvia now read *Sovetskaya Molodezh'* every day. Why are these newspapers so popular? It is because of their willingness to take risks, such as publishing interviews with Boris Yel'tsin and Andrey Sakharov (or printing soft-core pornography), and their desire to hold an audience in their home republics by publishing a large amount of information on popular activism. Not surprisingly, given that these papers have become virtual mouthpieces for the people's front organizations, Moscow has tried to rein them in. The most dramatic effort came last fall, when the authorities announced that Russian-language papers from Estonia and Latvia would not be available for subscription outside their home republics. This step, taken at the behest both of military officers who were upset at the publication of articles critical of the army and of Siberian party secretaries who confiscated earlier issues containing the Yel'tsin interview, provoked a storm of criticism in the Baltic republics and outside. Significantly, the article about the decision to rescind the order ran under the caption, "They're Reading the Youth Paper in Washington," a reflection of the influence of attentive foreign publics on what happens in the Baltic republics.[23]

A second example, and one that is almost comical, involved the competition between Armenians and Azeris in Moscow trying to reach other republics, Moscow, and the West with their respective cases during the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis. The Armenians started with an enormous advantage: a large Armenian population in Moscow, a sympathetic Russian intelligentsia, and preexisting channels to the West, via both Armenian cultural institutions and the Armenian permanent representation in Moscow. The Azeris had none of these advantages: there are only a few thousand Azeris in Moscow, the Russian intelligentsia is generally hostile, and the Azeris have few contacts with the West, except for Turkey. Soon, however, the Azeris went to work. Initially, they organized in a local Moscow library and then created a Moscow Society of Students and Graduate Students from Azerbaijan to reach out to Western journalists. Then, they sought and received support from the Turkish government, which allowed them access to formerly closed military archives in order to support Baku's claim to Nagorno-Karabakh. And finally, they launched a series of foreign tours and visits to other Soviet Muslim republics to shore up support.[24] So far, they have won few converts, but their effort continues and may inspire others.

But perhaps the most interesting example of all is provided by the activities of the Uzbeks. A leader among other nationalities in publishing news about other republics in their local papers, the Uzbeks have recently learned the utility of the foreign press in supporting their national demands. Despite being attacked for providing information to *The New York Times,* the Uzbek intellectuals have continued to supply material via this channel, and it is almost certain that the demonstrations in Tashkent that led to the removal of the Mufti Babakhan from leadership of the Religious Directorate for Central Asia and Kazakhstan would not have been possible had the foreign press corps not been informed of the demonstrations in advance. (Moscow may not have been unhappy either, given Babakhan's bad relations with foreign Muslims, but the manner of his removal doubtless troubled even those wanting his ouster.)[25]

Organizational innovation. The most important strategy over the longer term is likely to be the elaboration of new political institutions as channels to mobilize publics and to enhance their ability to influence the regime. Here, I would like to point to two of the most interesting of these institutions, the first very familiar but generally misunderstood, and the second virtually unknown but capable of becoming a model for a variety of other groups.

The people's fronts that began in the Baltic republics but later found resonance in many other republics, at least at the elite level, are the most misunderstood organizations of the Gorbachev era. They were not created to be alternative party groupings, nor are they simple expressions of popular will. Instead, their creation and evolution reflects the conjunction of three interests: Moscow's interest in pressuring recalcitrant republic governments and using the republics as a model of what can be done elsewhere; republic government interest in co-opting the nationalists and preventing a further radicalization of the population; and alternative-elite interest in finding a means to enter into a dialogue with the authorities from some sort of independent base. All the evidence suggests that the creation of people's front organizations was taken reluctantly; one Estonian commented that the Balts began such organizations in order to have some chance of changing the party only after the expulsion of Yel'tsin from the Politburo in 1987.[26] To a certain extent, however, all three interests have been met by these organizations, but because radical nationalists in each republic have penetrated

[23] *Molodezh' Estonii* (Tallinn), Jan. 3, 1989.
[24] *Molodezh' Azerbaydzhana* (Baku), July 30 and Dec. 12, 1988.
[25] *Pravda Vostoka* (Tashkent), Dec. 15, 1988.
[26] On the role of Yel'tsin's ouster, see *Molodezh' Estonii,* Oct. 18, 1988.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the organizations, the people's fronts in the Baltic republics have gone much further than was anticipated. Nevertheless, their leaderships remain far more moderate and responsible—given Baltic conditions—than leaderships of groups not so sponsored and organized might have been. In all three Baltic republics, the people's front leaderships now play a key role in ethnic politics, simultaneously reining in radicals, maintaining their own bases of support and pressuring the authorities on some issues, and making concessions on others lest Moscow intervene.

A more portentous development has been the organization of two groups representing the so-called Small Peoples of the North, the 26 micro-nationalities spread across the northern tier of the USSR from the Kola peninsula to Alaska. By themselves, these nationalities have been politically impotent; their demonstrations do not work, their complaints are ignored, and alliances with senior leaders such as Yegor Ligachev have been generally unreliable. They are, however, of importance to Moscow for economic reasons—the region is where much of the new growth will take place over the next decade—and for political ones—the Arctic is now an important part of Gorbachev's policy agenda with respect to Canada, the US, and northern Europe. This has led to these tiny nationalities' being attended to in ways that seem almost perverse. Perhaps the strangest case came three years ago when a single émigré of Itel'men nationality complained about conditions in her home territory in a series of articles in the West European press. Within six months, Moscow announced for that 1,300-person nationality a development program that in per capita terms was the largest in history. Few other groups were as well-placed; but all clearly glimpsed the open door.

In June 1988, Moscow created a new Arctic Administration to cope with the situation. Under pre-Gorbachev conditions, once this organizational innovation was put in place, little else would have happened. But under current conditions, the 26 nationalities have reacted in an interesting way. In January 1989, they called for the formation of an Association of Small Peoples of the North, explicitly intended to be a negotiating partner with the new administration so that the latter could not play one nationality off against the others.[27] If this group does take off—and the people involved in its organization are such that this development is likely—the future seems clear. Each body will come to need the other, and this interdependence will undoubtedly lead to a revolving door between them—a situation familiar to any student of interest group politics in the West. For any reader of Philip Selznick, the message is also obvious: in the Soviet Union, the organizational weapon has finally met the grass roots.

Alliance formation. The alliances that have been formed in the Gorbachev era, some of which have already been discussed, are diverse both in composition and in purpose. Some have been formed within a republic between alternative elites and officials, others spread across the USSR, and still others are with foreign groups. Some may be official, others unofficial; some the regime has encouraged, and some it clearly fears. Let me give several examples. First, the Volga Tatars have renewed their effort to build a Tatar-dominated entity in the Middle Volga–Urals region, this time one based on common interests rather than, as with Sultan Galiyev in the 1920's, on any common ideology.[28] Second, some groups have taken the lead in instructing other groups: the Jews are helping the Tajiks in Uzbekistan to organize, and the Balts are providing guidance to all other national elites who see the people's front strategy as useful.[29] Third, drawing on the Armenian model of using the diaspora to support its demands, virtually all non-Russian nationalities have stepped up their interest in and contacts with co-nationals in other countries, with the Azeris playing up the fact that they have 15 million ethnic brothers in Iran, and the Balts highlighting their ties with American Baltic groups. Fourth, regime-sponsored interrepublic economic and academic bodies have taken on a life of their own, serving as an important pipeline of unofficial contact. And fifth, all nationalities are learning to use such contacts in symbolic terms. Not accidentally, Russians in the republics have sought to play on their ties to Russians in Moscow, and every time Moscow has seemed to be on the verge of making a decision on the Caucasus, the Azerbaijani party leadership visited or was visited by Central Asian party leaders, a very unsubtle reminder of ties among Muslims who might be offended if Moscow sided with Armenia.

Using the system. In addition, non-Russians have

[27]See A. Pika and B. Prokhorov, "The Big Problems of Small Peoples," *Kommunist* (Moscow), No. 16, November 1988, pp. 76–83; Ye. A. Oborotova, "Northern Peoples in the Contemporary World," *Sovetskaya Etnografiya* (Moscow), No. 5, 1988, pp. 146–51; *Izvestiya*, Dec. 24, 1987, June 26, 1988, and Nov. 15, 1988; and especially the roundtable in *Sovetskaya Kul'tura* (Moscow), Feb. 11, 1989.

[28]B. Zheleznov,"Ways of Perfecting Soviet State Autonomy," *Kommunist Tatarii* (Kazan'), No. 11, 1988, pp. 18–19.

[29]On the remarkable collaboration of Jews and Tajiks, see *Komsomol-i Tajikistan* (Dushanbe), Jan. 6, 1988, trans. in British Broadcasting Corporation, *Summary of World Broadcasts* (London), Apr. 6, 1988.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

been remarkably adept at taking advantage of a number of other opportunities offered by the system to pursue their goals. Three areas seem especially important. First, they have successfully used the new electoral system and legislative bodies to mobilize public opinion and advance their causes. Intriguingly, they have employed virtually all the tricks known in Western elections—from gerrymandering districts to reduce the representation of other groups, to publishing special campaign literature. Second, republic elites are increasingly exploiting both Soviet law and the constitution to manipulate the system, often against Moscow's interests. Moreover, they have become adept at quoting Lenin and other sacred scripts against the center. And third, they have taken advantage of the decay in certain republic party organizations either to penetrate them or to launch, with little opposition, alternative groups. For many non-Russians, the traditional Soviet question "*Kto kogo*?" no longer means "Who will defeat whom?" but rather, "Who will be co-opted by whom?"

Communal violence. Although not strictly a strategy within ethnic politics as understood here, communal violence may perform an important role for some groups as well as be an important element in defining the limits of ethnic politics. Certain groups can conceivably benefit from communal violence—it could invite central intervention and repression from which those groups would benefit—and so might see violence as a strategy. But the more important point here is that many Russians are likely to fail to distinguish clearly between communal violence and other forms of ethnic activism, and thus to become ever more supportive of those who promise to restore law and order.

The Russians

The Russians operate under some unique constraints. For most of Soviet history, their dominance could not be acknowledged; even now, it is difficult to speak of it openly. And the lack of a Russian republic party organization has meant that the political goals of the Russian nation were either mediated by officials who necessarily had an all-Union perspective or were taken up by groups outside the political system. As a result, the Russians and their spokesmen were and continue to be misunderstood.[30]

The Russian half of the Soviet population is the overlooked element in Soviet ethnic politics in a double sense. On the one hand, the Russians are an important political resource for systemic stability by virtue of their size and political culture. On the other, the Russians are increasingly an actor in ethnic politics, a role rewarding to them but profoundly threatening to other nationalities.

Like the other two actors in Soviet ethnic politics, the Russians are subdivided in a variety of ways. The most important one for present purposes is between Russians living in the RSFSR and those living in other republics. As mentioned above, Russians living in the Russian Republic suffer from two important constraints. Because they lack many of the political and cultural institutions that nations in other republics have, their behavior is not mediated through such institutions and instead is subject to officials who, even if Russians themselves, must be attentive to broader concerns. Second, because Russians form so large a portion of the population and conceive of the entire USSR as their own country in important respects, many activities that they engage in, which would be described as ethnic activism if they took place in non-Russian areas, are considered only in functional terms by both the Russians themselves and many observers. This has two major consequences. First, it means that much of Russian ethnic activism is misclassified as something else and that only certain extreme groups are viewed as expressing the Russian position. Thus, *Pamyat'* is often equated with Russian nationalism, when in fact it is only a minuscule part of a broad spectrum of Russian nationalism and is detested by many Russian nationalists. Second, it means that Russian activism by Russians in the RSFSR is both more frustrated by all-Union calculations and less constrained by republic elites than the activism of other groups.

More immediately interesting, because they are more likely to appear as ethnic political actors in the near term, are the nearly 30 million Russians who live in the non-Russian republics. Although they see the republics as part of their homeland and thus provide an important social and political glue to the system, they often tend to behave like non-Russian groups in response to local majority nationalities. Thus, for example, Russians in the Baltic republics have formed a variety of social and political institutions in order to defend and advance their interests, which may serve as an important incubator of ethnic assertiveness for other Russians. From Moscow's point of view, Russians from non-Russian republics may have some important utility in playing ethnic politics, but a too open reliance on them when the ideology that served to cover Russian control is being downplayed and when popular mobilization is going on carries with it enormous risks that the authorities may not be willing to bear. As a result, those

[30]For a more thorough discussion, see the source cited in fn. 22.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Russians in the republics who have always viewed themselves as representatives of the center may be cut loose or, what amounts to the same thing, made to feel that they have been cut loose. If this happens they could become further radicalized and even more difficult to control.

Moscow

The third and last of the major participants, Moscow, requires the least comment. The general thrust of Gorbachev's approach and the problems associated with it have already been described, and only three general observations are needed here. First, Moscow is deeply divided; it is split both among a variety of players who seek different alliances depending on interests and, even more important, between those committed to this new ethnic politics and those who either do not understand it or do not see it as desirable. Because of Moscow's position in the game, the attitudes of the latter are not unimportant.

Second, Moscow is the only one of the three players that is currently having to adjust to a somewhat diminished status. As has been observed, this situation derives from policy rather than institutional or cultural change and is less dramatic than it sometimes might appear. The major institutional supports of the system and therefore of Moscow—the party, the army, and the KGB—are still very much in place; the central leadership has at its disposal a variety of levers to effect its will; and finally, Moscow remains the only one of the players with the capacity to unilaterally end the game—which enables it to set important limits on the range and type of ethnic politics that can take place.

Third, Moscow faces major tasks requiring the elaboration of new strategies. From the point of view of its own interests, the central authorities need to recognize that the situation is not as serious as it sometimes appears and that it is not impossible to adopt regionally specific policies. Use of force in one area, such as the Caucasus, need not mean its broader application, and tolerance of Baltic activism need not mean tolerance of analogous developments elsewhere. In short, Moscow must learn to live with diversity and to avoid overreacting to specifics.

The authorities must also set explicit limits as to what is permitted. As was noted above, Gorbachev has been reluctant to do so, but since the 19th CPSU Conference in June 1988 and, more particularly, since the Armenian earthquake and the resultant establishment of the Ryzhkov commission,[31] Moscow has moved to set such limits. Its failure, however, to distinguish carefully between legitimate forms of political protest that must be protected and illegitimate ones, such as communal violence, that must be suppressed continues to create problems—as recent violence in Central Asia and the Caucasus shows. And finally, the authorities must start to channel in new ways those forces that have been mobilized—for example, via institutional innovations and by political methods such as agenda-setting, control of communication, and manipulation of economic resources and reform.

Avoiding an Apocalypse

Can this ethnic politics continue and develop? Or must it end in one of the two apocalypses outlined at the beginning? According to the old rules of the game as understood both in Moscow and in the West, apocalypse would be inevitable. But according to these same rules, many if not all of the developments just described would be impossible by definition. Obviously then, the rules have changed, if not totally, then to a significant degree, and so too must our expectations about the outcome.

The first apocalypse—disintegration of the USSR—remains just as unlikely now as it was in the past. Despite a willingness to tolerate more diversity in the Soviet republics than ever before, Moscow would clearly sacrifice almost all its other policy goals in order to maintain the integrity of the Soviet Union. And the second apocalypse—a return to significantly greater repression—needs to be rethought. The USSR is not now and is not likely in the future to become a liberal society in Western terms, so discussions about a "return" to repression are misplaced. At the same time, a simple restoration of the past—be it Brezhnevism or Stalinism—probably is impossible, except at costs far beyond the ability of the authorities to pay. As a result, we are likely to be entering a period where there will be a series of ratchet-like adjustments of freedom and repression, as both Moscow and the other actors feel the situation out. No one event is likely to mark a turning point in either direction, and we will have to develop tolerance for a certain amount of messiness if we are to understand the situation.

[31]Formation of a special commission of the Politburo headed by Politburo member and Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers Nikolay Ryzhkov to deal with the Armenian disaster was announced on December 7, 1988. Other Commission members are Politburo member and party Secretary Nikolay Slyun'kov, Defense Minister Dmitriy Yazov, and Yuriy Batalin and Lev Voronin, deputy chairmen of the USSR Council of Ministers. See TASS International Service in Russian, Dec. 7, 1988, trans. in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Soviet Union* (Washington, DC), Dec. 8, 1988, pp. 51–52.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In this last section, I would like to examine not what would guarantee or institutionalize ethnic politics or what would kill it, but rather focus on those forces, both endogenous and exogenous to ethnic politics itself, that are likely to lead to the contraction of the current ethnic political arena or to its expansion to new areas and players. I wish to conclude by pointing to five areas in which these competing forces are likely to play out.

There are three endogenous and three exogenous forces that are working or would work toward the contraction of the ethnic politics. The endogenous ones are: the usual objection that Soviet nationalities are not ethnic groups in the Western sense; expanded activism, and especially communal violence directed against Russians, by large groups such as the Ukrainians that might appear to threaten Moscow's ability to control the situation; and ethnic unrest within the key agencies supporting the system—the party, the military, and the KGB. While it is true that Soviet nationalities are not equivalent to American ethnic interest groups, it is also true that under certain conditions they will behave like them. The two most obvious of these conditions are an awareness that secession is not a real option and a belief that participation in the system provides real benefits. Except for the three Baltic nationalities, the Western Ukrainians, and still small sections of a few other groups, all Soviet ethnic communities appear to share this understanding; and even the exceptions may participate as ethnic groups in order to advance their interests. However, should Moscow's behavior lead them or the others to have doubts about either condition, the situation could change quickly. At the present time, the other two endogenous factors appear to be under control: Moscow has supported a far more repressive approach in Ukraine than elsewhere, and it does not yet face any serious ethnic divisions within the military and the KGB. The three exogenous factors that limit or might limit ethnic politics are: a political culture that does not tolerate diversity or opposition; collapse of the Soviet economy or serious unrest in Eastern Europe; and the ouster of Gorbachev for reasons other than tolerating ethnic activism. These are more serious, but considered in this way, the countervailing forces can be identified as well.

There are also three endogenous factors and three exogenous ones supporting the maintenance or even expansion of the system of ethnic politics. The endogenous factors include the benefits both Moscow and the various other players have already derived from participation in ethnic politics; the role of the Russians as a ballast to untrammeled activism by others; and changes in the political culture itself. While the last is slow, there is obvious evidence of movement that could help to stabilize the situation. The three exogenous factors include significant expansion of the economy (admittedly not likely in the short run); Gorbachev's own agenda particularly in foreign policy that requires domestic change; and significant losses by conservative groups in the leadership for other reasons. Again, by dividing the supportive factors this way, we will be in a better position to assess future change.

How are these diverse forces likely to play out in the near term? The first thing to say is that the much-delayed Central Committee plenum on nationalities is not going to solve anything. Indeed, holding a plenum on nationality issues as such may initially cause more problems than it solves by raising expectations that the regime cannot meet and by creating gridlock as various players advance their demands and seek alliances. A more useful approach might have been that employed by Lenin, who sponsored more limited meetings between the Central Committee and representatives of particular regions in order to thrash out policy. Perhaps the Ryzhkov commission in the Caucasus suggests Moscow is beginning to think in these terms.

Nevertheless, the pre-plenum discussions as reported in *Kommunist* and elsewhere provide useful indications of the directions in which Moscow is likely to move, both at the plenum and beyond. The most obvious of these are:

- *True bilingualism.* Non-Russians will have to learn Russian as before, but Russians living in the non-Russian republics will have to learn the language of the titular nationality. In the short run, this step will be extremely popular on the periphery, but because it may lead many Russians to leave non-Russian areas, it could ultimately weaken Moscow's control and thus is likely to be resisted.
- *Economic reform.* Republics are likely to receive what they say they want: republic *khozrashchet,* but this will not be a transfer of power and will not always work simply for the benefit of the nationalities. Many republics will come out losers because they currently depend on central aid, and many nationalities will discover that if they have to pay their own way, they will not be able to maintain some of the institutions, cultural and otherwise, that they now have.
- *Strengthened federalism.* This is the area of greatest debate. Further devolution of power to the republics is likely, although it may be combined with recentralization in some areas, such as in key economic sectors. The existing federal system is likely to be simplified, with some autonomous soviet socialist republics raised to union-republic status, and sub–union-republic groups put in a single category. At the same time, a variety of

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mechanisms to protect extraterritorial groups—for example, through the creation of regional national soviets or republic supreme soviets of nationalities, or through the expansion of central supervision of ethnic rights for individuals—is likely. And the republics are likely to receive greater official representation in the center via the permanent representations or other devices.

- *A "nationalities court."* Moscow does not now have a mechanism for resolving interethnic conflicts that is both institutionalized and not directly linked to the highest leadership circles. Such an institution is very much needed, but its exact form is still undecided—precisely because of indecision regarding the powers to be granted it. Some advocate making the Supreme Soviet of Nationalities into such a body; others have called for the reestablishment of some kind of USSR Ministry of Nationalities along the lines of the old People's Commissariat for Nationalities (*Narkomnats*); and still others want a series of commissions to handle this within the party. Some action is likely both because the top leadership wants to deflect this issue onto others, and because the current arrangements regularly break down.
- *Expanded non-Russian participation in the Politburo and USSR Council of Ministers.* Moscow will almost certainly elevate some republic party leaders to the Politburo as candidate members, both to increase the non-Russians' sense of participation and to divide these elites. Gorbachev's earlier moves against non-Russians at the center had the effect of uniting republic elites; now he appears set to reverse course, something at which he has proved remarkably adept.

The result of the plenum will not be some "solution" to the nationality problem. The days when it could be declared "solved" are over. The best Moscow and the two other players can hope for is an institutionalization of the current messiness and a growing acceptance of limits by all three. To the extent that this happens, the rise of ethnic politics in the USSR may point to a more thoroughgoing reconceptualization of Soviet political life, one likely to draw as much on *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall* as on *What is to Be Done?*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dilemmas of Russian Nationalism

Roman Szporluk

The present state of ethnic relations in the Soviet Union, writes Aleksandr Zharnikov in the June 1989 issue of *Kommunist,* results from the literal collapse of the "command-administrative system." This system had consistently undermined the principle of self-determination of nations, replacing it with the concept of the Russians as "elder brother" of the other Soviet peoples. This substitution lies at the root of recent expressions of anti-Russian sentiments. It is not surprising, argues Zharnikov, that the sins of the compromised command-administrative system tend to be attributed in some degree to the "elder brother," i.e., to the Russian people. Unfortunately, there are also people who deliberately "speculate" on the problems of their nations—"and which nation has no problems?"—and try to make the "elder brother" responsible for all their troubles.[1]

Zharnikov's is only one of many voices that have explicitly or implicitly argued recently that the relationship between the Russian nation and the Soviet state—let us call it the Russian national problem—is *the* central ethnic problem in the Soviet Union today, not least because it also defines the nature of the other nationality problems in the USSR. For the non-Russians tend to formulate their own agendas in light of their perception of the status and role of the Russian nation in the Soviet state.

If this is the case, then the roots of the Russian problem go deeper than the bankrupt command-administrative system or Stalinism. After all, it is commonplace to view Stalinism, and by extension the present Soviet system, as a continuation of the tsarist, imperial pattern of inter-nationality relations. Thus, the search for solutions to current nationality problems must go back to the relationship established in tsarist times between the state and the Russian nation. Moreover, a genuine normalization or "regularization" of the Soviet nationality situation requires above all that the Russian national problem be properly defined—and resolved.

There is a large and growing body of writings on Russian nationalism in particular, and on Russian political thought in general. The most recent addition to it is a collection of insightful essays by John Dunlop, Darrell Hammer, Ronald Suny, Andrei Sinyavsky, and Alexander Yanov in a special edition of the *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin* entitled "Russian Nationalism Today."[2] These and other scholars have also produced studies of diverse currents in the broad phenomenon of past and present Russian nationalism. Under the Romanov empire, there were Slavophiles, Westernizers, and adherents of "Official Nationality," as well as *pochvenniki,* Pan-Slavs, liberal nationalists, and integral nationalists. In the contemporary Soviet Union, Dunlop discerns liberal nationalists, centrists, a nationalist Right, including the National Bolsheviks, and so forth. For his part, Yanov carefully distinguishes between nationalism, chauvinism, and patriotism:

Patriotism, chauvinism, and nationalism have one thing in common: they are all manifestations of love of

---

Roman Szporluk is Professor of History at The University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) and Director of the Center for Russian and East European Studies. He has written widely on questions of national identity and nationalism, on which his most recent work is Communism and Nationalism: Karl Marx versus Friedrich List *(1988).*

[1]Aleksandr Zharnikov, "National Self-Determination in Theory and Practice," *Kommunist* (Moscow), No. 9, June 1989, p. 62. Zharnikov is the scientific secretary of the scientific communism section in the Institute of Marxism-Leninism in Moscow.

[2]Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty (hereafter—RFE-RL),"Russian Nationalism Today," *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin* (Munich), Special Edition, Dec. 19, 1988.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one's country. Yet, distinctions are evident—at least in the Russian context. A patriot loves his country, but this does not prevent him from loving humanity. A chauvinist loves his country but dislikes humanity, especially if it is of Jewish origin. A nationalist loves his country but sees humanity as an invading force ready to conquer it—with the Jews in the vanguard.[3]

While the conceptual distinctions of Yanov, Dunlop, and other scholars help to clarify intellectual currents in contemporary Russian nationalism, the present essay proposes to focus on a question they do not consider—namely, what do Russian nationalists, patriots, or chauvinists mean by the country they claim to love? Is one Russian patriot's "Russia" the same as the "Russia" of another patriot (chauvinist, nationalist)? Moreover, this "geographic" question will be linked to a political theme developed by Sinyavsky in his discussion of the acuteness of the nationality problems facing the Soviet government. Sinyavsky writes:

The main reason for this can be summed up in a single word—"empire": first, the Russian empire, shaped in the course of centuries and inherited by the new order; then, the Soviet empire, built on the ruins of the old order, consolidated and extended as a world power. Today, it is the only empire in the world and unique as a country in terms of the sheer extent of its territory and number of its constituent peoples. Of necessity, being an empire complicates the nationality problem to an unusual degree.[4]

Sinyavsky also notes that "Soviet ideology has collapsed in ruins, and whatever attempts are made to revivify it, it will never imbue life with higher meaning. Soviet society today . . . is without ideals."[5]

It is worth noting that in his speech before the Congress of People's Deputies in Moscow on June 5, 1989, Andrey Sakharov characterized the Soviet situation in exactly the same way. Even as the country finds itself "in the throes of spreading economic catastrophe and a tragic worsening of interethnic relations," Sakharov said, "one aspect of the powerful and dangerous processes at work has been a general crisis of confidence in the country's leadership. . . . accumulating tensions could explode, with dire consequences for our society." With regard to nationality problems, Sakharov said: "We have inherited from Stalinism a constitutional structure that bears the stamp of imperial thinking and the imperial policy of 'divide and rule'." Among the victims of the imperial system Sakharov counts not only the non-Russian nations but also the Russian nation, which "had to bear the main burden of imperial ambitions and the consequences of adventurism and dogmatism in foreign and domestic policy."[6]

Such opinions on the present condition of the USSR are heard with increasing frequency and intensity both inside and outside the USSR. In a much discussed article in *Literaturnaya Rossiya* published in 1988, Yuriy Afanas'yev claimed to see an "ideological vacuum" in the Soviet Union resulting in what he called an"identity crisis" of society. He attributed the crisis and the "vacuum" to the "systematic destruction of collective memory" perpetrated under Stalin and Brezhnev. Yet, historical memory is the pivotal formative component of social group identity. Afanas'yev directly attributed the rise of what he called "chauvinist, anti-Semitic groups, like the extremists from *Pamyat'*," to that destruction of historical memory.[7]

Alain Besançon has concluded that, with the bankruptcy of Marxism-Leninism, the only alternative source of legitimacy is the empire, regardless of how anachronistic it may be:

Once the ideological magic has been destroyed, there would only be one source of magic left—the imperial or colonial legitimacy of the Russian people in a world that today is entirely decolonized.[8]

Is Besançon necessarily right? Are the Russians incapable of defining themselves as other than an imperial nation?

Empire or Nation-State

The Bolshevik victory in the Civil War stopped what in 1917–19 looked like the natural process of disintegration of the Russian Empire into a number of independent nation-states that had started following the February (March) Revolution of 1917. As we see now, this victory also prevented Russia's evolution into a "normal" nation and state.[9] The subsequent Bolshevik at-

[3]Ibid., p. 49.
[4]Ibid., p. 25.
[5]Ibid., p. 33.

[6]*Izvestiya* (Moscow), June 11, 1989. Sakharov's address has been translated by Edward Kline; see *The New York Review of Books*, Aug. 17, 1989, pp. 25–26.
[7]Yuriy Afanas'yev, "Restructuring and Historical Knowledge," *Literaturnaya Rossiya* (Moscow), June 17, 1988, pp. 2–3 and 8–9.
[8]Alain Besançon, "Nationalism and Bolshevism in the USSR," in Robert Conquest, Ed., *The Last Empire: Nationality and the Soviet Future*, Stanford, CA, Hoover Institution Press, 1986, p. 11.
[9]Ibid., pp. 12–13.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tempt to transcend altogether the dialectic of nation and nationalism by establishing class as the basic referent, and class solidarity as the principle of new legitimacy and identity, failed. Instead, the imperial model was restored in a communist guise, with the Russian nation being elevated to the rank of "elder brother," but itself becoming an object of manipulation by Stalin and the system he created. The establishment of communist regimes in Asia and Eastern Europe after World War II extended the power and influence of the Soviet state beyond anything the tsars had ever achieved. But the establishment of the "socialist bloc" did not end the Soviet Union's reliance on and promotion of Russia. It was not until *after* 1945 that the "Russia First" slogan became paramount in philosophy, culture, science, and so on, first in the Soviet Union and then in Eastern and Central Europe. Domestically, the annexation of the Baltic states, Western Belorussia, and Western Ukraine further complicated the already existing nationality problem—as has become especially evident under *glasnost'*. The extension of communism beyond the borders of the USSR, and the territorial expansion of the Soviet state in turn tied the Russians more closely to the problems of both the "inner" and the "outer" empires, thereby inhibiting even more their search for national self-definition.

This legacy makes the question "What is Russia?" even more complex. But the present map of Soviet and Russian politics will become much clearer if one distinguishes between two basic responses from the Russian people to the question—that of "empire-savers" and that of "nation-builders."

"Empire-savers" regard the present Soviet Union in its current boundaries as the proper and legitimate national "space" of the Russian nation. Indeed, some of them may extend it to the Soviet bloc. They may and indeed do differ profoundly about how they would like to see that country governed, how non-Russians should be treated in it, and so forth. But they all share the conviction that the USSR is in essence a synonym for Russia and consider the preservation of its political unity as a Russian (or Russian-dominated) state to be their primary political goal. That they may include extreme right-wingers and no less extreme left-wingers is not as important as the fact that they all agree on this fundamental point.

On the other side are those Russians who think of Russia as something very different from the USSR—as a geographical, historical, and cultural entity that does not encompass what they themselves recognize to be non-Russian lands and nations, even if these are part of the USSR. The geographical extent of Russia is not identical for all "nation-builders." Unlike the empire-savers, some nation-builders exclude the Baltic states from Russia but include the Caucasus; others exclude both of these but include Ukraine and Belorussia, and so on. What unifies them is a basically national position and the political goal of establishing a Russia that is a *nation-state.* Their goal is not to save, reform, transform, or modernize the empire but to establish in its place a Russian and a number of non-Russian nation-states. Insofar as nation-builders envisage close ties between Russia and some or all of the other "successors"—and some Russian nation-builders are in favor of such ties—they want *Russia,* and not the imperial center, to be a party to such arrangements.

It is impossible to determine how many Russians prefer empire-saving to nation-building or vice versa. But it is remarkable that in a recent article called "Preservation of the Empire or Self-Preservation by Way of National Sovereignty—The Main National Problem of the Russian People," Vladimir Balakhonov formulates the Russian national dilemma in these same terms,[10] which suggests that the issue is entering the political agenda.

"Empire-Savers"

It is essential to keep in mind that this broad designation encompasses ideas and programs, individuals and organizations, which in most other respects have little in common, and may disagree and oppose one another on some fundamental matters. But this fact does not make "empire-saving" a meaningless concept. When the chips are down, all empire-savers (it would be much simpler to call them "imperialists," but this term has now become one of abuse) agree that the preservation of the territorial integrity of the state is more important than anything else.

The classical expression of this approach is to be seen in the post-1917 phenomenon of "National Bolshevism," a designation describing those Russian anti-communists in the Civil War who opted for the Bolsheviks because they saw the latter as the only force capable of saving the empire. Private property, independent courts, freedom of religion, representative government—all these could be given up in exchange for "Russia's" retention of Ukraine, the Caucasus, or Central Asia. For the National Bolsheviks, a smaller but democratic Russia was no consolation for the loss of the empire.

Among today's most obvious empire-savers are the

[10]See *Russkaya Mysl'* (Paris), June 23, 1989, pp. 6–7. Balakhonov's article was originally published in issue No. 13 of *Svobodnoye Slovo,* the independent publication of the Democratic Union.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

military and the police, the state and party bureaucracies, members of other "all-Union" structures and apparatuses, such as foreign ministry or cultural officials engaged in foreign relations. Imperial nationalism offers an ideological justification for the dominant position of the central bureaucracy (and its departmental and territorial subdivisions). For the Moscow bureaucracy, the whole of the USSR, be it Estonia or Armenia, Russia "proper" or Moldavia, Ukraine or Uzbekistan, represents the canvas for its "creative" undertakings. The ministries of nuclear power stations and of water irrigation, not to mention the State Planning Committee, embody this imperial perspective and vision. A song that was popularized by the official media during the era of "stagnation" (and now is criticised for its wrong attitude) reflects "artistically" the same imperial outlook, especially in this much-quoted refrain: "Not some house, not some street—my address is the Soviet Union."

Some of today's empire-savers may continue to believe that the political system established by Lenin and Stalin is the best for the Soviet Union. As a matter of principle, they may question whether political freedom is a desirable goal in any circumstances, and they are certain to oppose political freedoms when these threaten the unity, and thus indirectly the territorial integrity, of the Soviet state. Indeed, some may go even further and favor some kind of military or fascist-style dictatorship that would abandon Marxist-Leninist ideology openly and completely. For our purposes, they are empire-savers, because they consider the USSR to be a Russian state. But right-wing extremism is not the only "empire-saving" outlook today. It may even be the least important, although it is very vocal.

Other empire-savers seem to favor Western, liberal-democratic, and constitutional institutions for the Soviet Union. Indeed, when some of those "liberals" think of their ideal Russia, they envisage a polity closely resembling what they imagine the United States to be. That their empire would be a liberal one, would have independent courts, would accept equality of all citizens before the law (without regard to ethnic origins, national background, religion and so forth), is of course praiseworthy. But what is decisive in this outlook is that it treats the non-Russian peoples—and the Russians too—as subject to decisions made in Moscow—and not by those peoples themselves. Some of these "imperial" admirers of America are prepared to allow local and regional autonomy in their state, and they even discuss the possibility of basing such autonomy on what they see as the most significant aspect of the American model: dissociation of ethnicity *from territory*.

Some of the "Westernizers" go even farther. They openly proclaim their own desire for a total separation of ethnicity from politics and the state, for making nationality, as it were, a private matter of concern only to individuals, rather than having it be a factor affecting the state structure. Again, some Soviet scholars seem to think that this idea is realized in the United States.[11]

There are grounds to surmise that the current line of the center in the face of rising ethnic nationalisms is to defuse the threat coming from the larger nations by having Moscow assume the role of defender of smaller nations, and especially of scattered national and religious groups living among the non-Russian peoples. This policy would serve two purposes. It would weaken union republics by granting their citizens the right to go to Moscow for justice, and it would create a new mission for the old apparat—which would become the protector of ethnic and human rights all over the USSR, in the same old centralized way to which it became accustomed while admittedly doing other things. The newly appointed head of the Ethnography Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Valeriy Tishkov, for one, is on record against "absolutizing" the rights of the union republics over the rights of other entities such as autonomous republics or national districts.[12] Indeed, the center seems, in self-defense, to be advocating the granting of broader rights to the subdivisions of the union republics, presumably in order to give Moscow more things to do, and not because the Moscow bureaucracy now consists of converts to libertarianism and individualism.

Whether empire-savers are fascist or liberal, extremist or moderate, atheist or Orthodox, their "geography" is the same—it is an imperial geography, and their Russia is co-extensive with the empire. But why should the hoped-for liberal empire be called Russian? Why should it not have the "Soviet" or some other non-ethnic designation? Recent Soviet discussions help answer this question.

The historic failure of the Soviet system is openly conceded today. The declaration of the Congress of People's Deputies issued in June 1989 speaks about the present "crisis" of the Soviet Union. It is admitted that the Soviet system has failed to defeat capitalism in their historic "great contest." This failure has called into question the concept of a "Soviet people." If a new Soviet civilization has not been created, as is also being admitted, then in what sense are the peoples living in the USSR a *Soviet* people?[13]

[11]See the various "liberal" views expressed in the round-table discussion entitled "Democracy Is Conflict. A Search for a Correct Resolution of National Problems in the USSR," *Vek XX i Mir* (Moscow), No. 12, 1988, pp. 8–17.

[12]Valeriy Tishkov, "Nations and the State," *Kommunist*, No. 1, January 1989, pp. 49–59.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The empire-savers are noticeably concerned to preserve the concept of a "Soviet people." But when one examines their arguments closely, one discovers that the "Soviet people" they defend is a form of the Russian nation. Academician Yulian Bromley (until 1989 director of the Ethnography Institute) defined the "Soviet people" as a real community that is held together by common socialist features. He called it a "meta-ethnic community."[14] In a January 1989 article, Bromley recognized that demands for greater use of "national"—which in the Soviet usage means subnational or local or regional—languages in the non-Russian republics of the Soviet Union are legitimate. But he stressed the necessity of a continuing and expanding use of Russian throughout the USSR. Revealingly, Bromley referred to the publication of fiction and poetry in the non-Russian languages as indicating the growth of the "nationally-specific" as opposed to the "general," which means that he considers the publication of fiction and poetry in Russian to represent "the general," that is, the integrating or internationalizing tendency.[15]

Bromley attributes "international" qualities to the Russian language, and by extension to the Russian ethnos, even though to an outsider there would appear to be no more internationalism in the Russian language than there is in Georgian or Abkhazian. One may well ask whether a poem praising Lenin in Armenian would be "nationally specific," while one written in Russian, praising Nicholas II, would be "general and integrating" just because it was written in Russian. Absurd as this may be, such categorizations lay at the root of imperial thinking in Stalin's time—and seem to be alive today. The Estonian scholar Jaan K. Rebane has recently made the point that in this view, the "internationalist" (i.e., Soviet) or "general" means one ethnically specific aspect—the Russian.[16]

Bromley's reference to the non-Russian languages as expressing "the specific" and his assumption that Russian stands for "the general" shows quintessential Russian imperial thinking, and makes it clear why it is a Russian, and not a Soviet, imperial thinking. It is based on the assumption that Russian ethnicity is not in the same category as all the other ethnicities in the USSR: it is above them, it is a distinguishing feature of the "universality" of Sovietism. This approach holds that the unity of the USSR is based on the non-Russians' submergence in—not their integration as equals with—Russia.

What some other prominent figures understood by "internationalization" became clear from a speech by Yevgeniy M. Primakov given at the 19th Party Conference in June 1988. Primakov proposed the establishment of "international structures" by means of a "rotation of cadres along horizontal lines in the whole country," a move made imperative by "the lessons from recent events in Azerbaijan and Armenia." Primakov argued:

Only through such a horizontal transfer of party and economic personnel will it be possible to create a single international fusion in the Soviet Union, one that will be more monolithic than the sum of national [i.e., ethnic] formations that gravitate toward seclusion.[17]

Academician Primakov did not explain who would implement such a transfer of cadres. The new political reforms in the USSR seem to make the decision as to who shall head a given party or economic organization subject to elections. This would mean that Moscow could no longer appoint or transfer leading cadres from one republic or region to another. It is obvious that Primakov's plan would require the retention of the power of appointment by the center.

Exchange of cadres between republics was a standard theme in the Brezhnev and Andropov times, and Mikhail Gorbachev himself also used to endorse it, at least until the January 1987 plenum of the Central Committee, after which this topic seems to have disappeared from his public pronouncements. But in April 1989, Abdul-Rakhman Bezirov, first secretary of the Azerbaijan Central Committee, spoke strongly in favor of an exchange of party officials between republics and the center, although from a different perspective than Primakov's. His complaint was that for years no party officials from his republic had been called to serve in Moscow.[18]

Academician S. L. Tikhvinskiy, an influential historian, insisted at an academic conference in 1987 that it was necessary to develop new forms of inter-republic cooperation in the scholarly sphere. Tikhvinskiy stressed the need to "resolutely overcome the harmful

[13]For a fuller discussion of this problem, see Roman Szporluk, "The Imperial Legacy and the Soviet Nationalities Problem," in Lubomyr Hajda and Mark Beissinger, Eds., *The Nationalities Factor in Soviet Politics and Society*, Boulder, CO, Westview (forthcoming).

[14]Yu. V. Bromley, "Being a Cohesive Force," *Sovetskaya Kul'tura* (Moscow), June 25, 1988, p. 8.

[15]Yu. V. Bromley, "National Problems under Restructuring" *Voprosy Istorii* (Moscow), No. 1, 1989, p. 40.

[16]J. K. Rebane, "Let Us Build Together Reasonable Relations," *Kommunist*, No. 4, March 1989, p. 85. This argument is not new, of course, as the title of Ivan Dzyuba's book written a quarter of a century ago—*Internationalism or Russification?*—reminds us.

[17]*Pravda* (Moscow), July 2, 1988.

[18]Ibid., Apr. 27, 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tendency to divide science (*nauka*) into Ukrainian or Azerbaijani, central or peripheral." According to him, only one, Soviet, historical science existed, and it was "firmly grounded" in Marxism-Leninism and socialist internationalism.[19] It is worth noting that Tikhvinskiy spoke about Soviet scholarship and about internationalism, but did not deny the existence of a Russian historical science. One suspects that he identified Russian with Soviet or "internationalist" scholarship, even though it was hard in 1987, and impossible in 1989, to ignore the fact that Russian historical writing is not firmly grounded in either Marxism-Leninism or in socialist internationalism.

Some scholars do not have Tikhvinskiy's or Primakov's inhibitions about explicitly identifying "Soviet" with "Russian." Examples of uninhibited Russian imperial thinking may be found in the symposium "Democracy is Conflict" published in the monthly magazine *Vek XX i Mir*. Doctor of Philosophical Sciences A. Prigozhin was refreshingly open in characterizing the Russian nation as the "patron-nation" (*narod-patron*) of all the Soviet peoples. Prigozhin thought it quite self-evident and normal that the Russians should form the highest leadership of the country (i.e., of the USSR), and should predominate among the heads of the state's central agencies, in the USSR Academy of Sciences, the Central Committee of the CPSU, and so forth. He even thought that in the non-Russian national republics, Russian leaders should "also occupy a special position."[20] Clearly, for Prigozhin, being "Russian" means embodying and personifying the general or universal, the "Soviet," in the Soviet Union. By the same token, the other ethnic elements in Prigozhin's scheme of things represented the "specific," or particular, in other words, something local, subordinate, and inessential.

"Nation-Builders"

One of the consequences of the Soviet Union's identity crisis is the current rise of ethnic assertiveness in many regions of the country. Dissatisfaction with the Soviet system, general disillusionment with the empty promises of a better "Soviet way of life," and the search for alternative explanations of the current problems and ways of solving them lie behind the present processes in which ethnic communities "construct" and "reconstruct" themselves.

Among the nations in search of an identity and purpose are the Russians. They are increasingly asserting themselves—and defining themselves—as a *Russian nation* and, especially important, as a nation that exists independently of the state, which in this case means the empire. Some of the emerging Russian nationalists take pains to dissociate the Russian nation from the Soviet state's record not only in the 1930's, but also in the 1920's. Indeed, some are repudiating even the immediate post-revolutionary years. The process of reevaluation of history has assumed sufficiently large proportions to raise the possibility of a "divorce" or secession of Russian nationalism from the Soviet state and Marxist-Leninist ideology. If the trend continues and gains in scope, it may lead to the dissolution, "ungluing," or coming apart of what has been called by some Russia's "national communism."

More than 20 years ago, Mark G. Field defined national communism as "the search, on the part of a nation that has recently emerged as a major world power on the world scene, for a national and cultural identity." National communism, he wrote, rested on "the fusion of the doctrinal bases of the communist movement and identification of the interests of that movement (which is, in essence, supra-national) with the interests of the Russian nation." Field saw the sources of that "fusion" in the recognition by the Soviet leaders that "no proletarian revolution was in sight and the resulting decision (primarily Stalin's) to build 'socialism in one country'." Stalin considered Russia the bastion of the communist movement and held that "anything that added to the strength of Russia as a nation (industrialization, for example) was good for the movement."[21]

It is a separate question whether Stalin ultimately proved to be "good" for the world communist movement; what is relevant here is that more and more people say openly now that Stalin's regime was very bad for Russia. Bad not just for the Russian "landlords and bourgeoisie," for kulaks or even peasants in general, but also bad for Russia in the sense of the entire people and country. This theme has long been heard from declared anti-communists, for example, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who in the early 1970's, when he was still in the USSR, used to be the most prominent spokesman for this assessment of communism's relationship to Russia. While Solzhenitsyn criticized communism on behalf of the old, Orthodox Russia, certain extremist chauvinist elements among the dissidents criticized the Soviet past and present from another vantage point.

[19]S. L. Tikhvinskiy, "Tasks of Coordination in the Area of Historical Science," *Istoriya SSSR* (Moscow), No. 1, 1988, p. 119.

[20]"Democracy Is Conflict . . . ," loc. cit., p. 10.

[21]Mark G. Field, "Soviet Society and Communist Party Controls: A Case of Constricted Development," in Donald W. Treadgold, Ed., *Soviet and Chinese Communism: Similarities and Differences*, Seattle, WA, University of Washington Press, 1967, p. 196.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

They blamed the Soviet state's negative aspects on the Jews, Zionists, Freemasons, and so on, but professed their profound loyalty to "genuine" Soviet socialism (under which term they also understood Stalinism).[22]

Today, many people are convinced that Russia is hopelessly behind when compared with the other Soviet republics (not to mention foreign countries), and it is frequently said or implied that the ruling party, the state, and the ideology are to blame. Many examples can be cited to illustrate this pervasive mood, but a few will have to suffice. The well-known "village" writer Vasiliy Belov, speaking as a candidate for the USSR Congress of People's Deputies, said: "The ill-considered collectivization of the '30's inflicted great losses not only on the peasantry but also on the whole Russian people [*narod*]. According to my information, the Russians now constitute less than one half of the country's [population]." Belov complained that despite this fact, some scholars claimed that the Russians were characterized "by some special kind of aggressiveness." Those unnamed scholars even "dare to say that there exist special medical means to treat this aggressiveness. I was deeply angered to hear such a statement at one very representative conference."

Belov was no less critical of the government's conduct of foreign trade under the terms of which, he said, the Soviet Union exports its best goods, which are not accessible to the Soviet population, and buys industrial machinery from abroad, thus perpetuating the country's traditional role as a backward nation dependent on the foreigners' "technology of yesterday." (Belov assumed that foreigners do not sell their most up-to-date products.) If such practices continue, the country risks becoming "a colony."[23]

In an article in a series remarkably called "Who Is to Blame or What Is to be Done?" Yuriy Chernichenko referred to Russia (meaning the RSFSR, not the USSR as a whole) as a country that was the dirtiest in all of the USSR and in all of Europe, being dirtier in the Soviet era than in the early 19th century when the poet Mikhail Lermontov had called Russia "*nemytaya Rossiya*" (unwashed Russia). Chernichenko said it was time to "wash up" Russia (*otmyt' Rossiyu*), and he drew a direct connection between the sorry state of Russia and the rule by party bureaucrats who headed a "purely totalitarian regime, an administrative regime."[24]

It is not unusual to identify Russian nationalism with the most extreme, fascist, or racist ideas and groups. This point of view is erroneous. Fascism, racism, and extremism are not the only Russian-proposed alternatives to the ideology of communism and the present Soviet political system. There are many diverse currents in Russia, and it would be an impossible task to classify them without crude oversimplification. For the purposes of this discussion, however, let us rather consider several different models envisaged for Russia, each of which has at its source its proponents' sense of alienation from the present system.

First, there are those Russians who reject communism and Sovietism and who look for an alternative in a nationalism rooted in culture, especially in religion. The second model of Russia proposes a democratic, liberal, Western-style modern nation-state. A third model is advanced by those who are critical of the imperial structure of the Soviet Union and expect a change for the better if the RSFSR were to become a full-fledged republic. Their opposition to "Moscow"—read the Stalinist bureaucratic and centralized machine—leads these Russians to call for a basic change in the status of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic within the Soviet Union. They seem to believe that the national needs of Russia might be addressed and met if the RSFSR acquired an identity that was separate from the USSR and its governmental, party, and other organizations.

RSFSR-nationalism. Let us begin with the third model, which is anti-empire but is not anti-socialist or anti-Soviet in principle. It calls for an institutional rearrangement for the RSFSR that would amount to the removal of the Russian nation from the position of imperial nation in the USSR. An interview given recently by the secretary of the Moscow Writers' Union, Anatoliy Zhukov, to *Literaturnaya Rossiya* conveys well the mood of those "RSFSR-Russians." Zhukov cited some of the ethnic problems arising in Central Asia, the Baltic states, Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well the rise of "Russophobia" in Kazakhstan and elsewhere, and attributed them to neglect of the specific conditions in those particular regions. These republics could not deal with their problems adequately because they lacked the freedom to run their own affairs. When asked if this was also true of the Russian Federation, Zhukov responded:

Of course. Why should we be an exception? But we are an exception. In Russian schools, for example, Russian history is not being taught, there is only the history of the USSR. We do not have our own republic academy of sciences, we do not have our own republic party or Komsomol central committee, there

[22]Alexander Yanov's and John B. Dunlop's many publications provide full documentation and analysis of those currents.

[23]G. Sazonov, "Vasiliy Belov: Do Not Be Afraid of *Glasnost'*," *Pravda*, Mar. 5, 1989.

[24]*Znamya* (Moscow), No. 2, 1989, pp. 168–69.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are no [republic-rank] trade union organs, and no congresses are held. The Russians are last in the number of specialists with college education and in the number of scientists per 1000 of population, our countryside has been ruined, our birth rates have fallen, our national culture has been almost destroyed. What is this if not an exception? We do not even have a capital of our own—we "share" one with the whole country.[25]

It goes without saying that Zhukov's statements are not always accurate. For example, he seems not to know that Ukrainian schools do not teach a subject called "Ukrainian history." What is more interesting is that Zhukov—and other Russian critics who complain that Russian history is not taught in Russian schools—do not think that what is being presented as the "history of the USSR" is a history of Russia. What is called "history of the USSR" in Soviet textbooks is principally the history of the tsarist state. When critics of this kind of history say they want a history of the Russian people, the Russian nation, they are revealing a belief that the story of the grand princes and tsars is not real Russian history. Indeed, some dispute the propriety of calling the pre-1917 history a history of the "USSR" (which is what Soviet historians do, and not only in textbooks but also in scholarly works). Thus, in a letter to the journal *Nash Sovremennik,* Colonel (Ret.) I. A. Zaichkin and Major-General of the Air Force I. N. Pochkayev, called it absurd to have book titles like "History of the USSR: Feudal Epoch." On the pre-1917 era, they said, there should be histories of *Russia* and of other nations.[26]

Admittedly, there is nothing politically subversive in such proposals. However, Russian demands of this kind are frequently presented by individuals who combine them with chauvinistic, including anti-Semitic, views. Thus, a letter to the 19th Party Conference signed by a group of Russian cultural figures contained a demand for ethnic quotas in those RSFSR institutions that the letter-signers wanted to have established.[27] (Incidentally, like Zhukov, the authors of this letter seem convinced that in the non-Russian republics, the histories of the respective nations are taught. This, as mentioned above, is certainly not the case now in Ukraine, and it seems most unlikely to be the case in Belorussia and a number of other republics.) The Russian "cultural figures" charged that the absence of RSFSR structures (they also included in their list the KGB and academies of the sciences and of the arts) perpetuates a "Zionist-Trotskyist program," which they described as follows: "A federation for the 'nationalities' with separate centers for them, but without one for the Russians." They said that Lenin had protested this program—evidently without success. "And so the Russians have now proved to be without rights in their own country!"[28]

The support for some of the Russian national desiderata by professed anti-Semites and reactionaries should not obscure the fact that not all of these desiderata are objectionable. While it would obviously be wrong to restrict employment in a Russian academy of sciences by ethnic quotas, the idea of establishing such a new academy is not discriminatory per se. Indeed, if realized, it might help to develop Russia and at the same time help to dissociate "Sovietism" from the Russian people as the Soviet Union's allegedly dominant master nation, or "patron-nation" in Prigozhin's phrase. Indeed, some years ago similar Russian demands circulated in *samizdat* and were then supported by leftists.[29]

One such idea that constantly reappears and seems

---

[25]Interview in *Literaturnaya Rossiya,* June 2, 1989.

[26]"For Objectivity in the History of the Fatherland," *Nash Sovremennik* (Moscow), No. 5, 1988, pp. 186–88.

[27]"Letter to the Soviet Government," *Literaturnyy Irkutsk,* December 1988, pp. 4 and 7.

[28]Ibid. The authors refer to Lenin's *Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy* (Complete Collected Works), Vol. 22, pp. 229–30, to support their assertion. The Soviet scholar, G. I. Kunitsyn, in "Self-Determination of Nations: The History of the Problem and Our Times," *Voprosy Filosofii* (Moscow), No. 5, 1989, pp. 66–86, argues that the Stalinist conception of the role of the Russian nation as the ruling nation of the Soviet state was put into practice after 1917, and that this was done in direct violation of Lenin's view. By depriving the RSFSR of the normal state structure of Soviet republics, and by placing Russia directly under central authorities, Stalin restored the pre-revolutionary great-power, imperialist concept, but he disguised it under revolutionary terminology. (See especially pp. 76–78.) There is not a word about "Zionists" or "Trotskyists" in Kunitsyn's balanced and well-documented account.

[29]Roy Medvedev wrote more than 10 years ago: "It is a fact that the national life of Russians is hampered to a far greater degree than that of, say, Armenians, Georgians, and the Uzbek peoples."

"Thus, for example, the villages and hamlets of basically Russian districts are in an immeasurably more neglected condition than the villages of Ukraine, Moldavia, the Transcaucasus, and the Baltic. Furthermore, Russians are basically deprived of their capital. As the capital of a multi-national Union, Moscow has almost lost its traits of a national Russian city, a capital of Russian lands such as it was prior to the Revolution. The more European, industrial, and bureaucratic Petersburg was the capital of the Empire. This transformation of Moscow into an international center devoid of clear national lines is by no means a positive consequence for the whole Russian nation."

"At present, the weakening of the national foundations of Russian life is neither legal [*zakonomernyy*—meaning, a natural process], nor progressive."

"How could not only the preservation but also the development of the distinctive originality of the Russian people be furthered? This is a question that demands social analysis. Let us note, first of all, that the old proposal of separating the capitals of the USSR and the RSFSR, for which many people were condemned under Stalin, is not so fruitless. Similarly, it is necessary to undertake wide-ranging and urgent measures for upgrading agriculture and culture in the basically Russian districts, especially in the center and the north of the European area of the RSFSR." See "What Awaits Us in the Future? (Regarding A. I. Solzhenitsyn's Letter)," in Michael Meerson-Aksenov and Boris Shragin, Eds. *The Political, Social, and Religious Thought of Russian "Samizdat"—An Anthology,* Belmont, MA, Nordland, 1977, pp. 77-78.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to bother Russians of all political persuasions is the dual role of Moscow as capital of the USSR and the RSFSR. Many Russians also complain that Leningrad has fallen from the rank of an imperial capital to that of a regional center. The question of the status of Leningrad was again raised quite recently in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* and *Literaturnaya Rossiya*. Writing in the latter, the Leningrad writer Feliks Dymov recalled that one of Stalin's charges against the Leningrad party leaders in 1949–50 was their proposal to move the capital of the RSFSR to that city. (Stalin regarded this as separatism.) Although Dymov did not take a definite stand in favor of such a move, he deplored the low ranking of the former capital, which, he said, in population, scientific potential, and industrial output, was far ahead of the 14 union-republic capitals.[30]

Nation as culture. No current of contemporary Russian opinion whether unofficial or "legal," has attracted Western scholars more than the complexities of Russian national-religious and "culturalist" thought. Indeed, there are Russian thinkers who want to explore and affirm the importance of the Orthodox religion and the Orthodox Church in the history of Russia, and who consider this spiritual aspect a formative influence on modern Russian identity. These thinkers disagree profoundly among themselves in their specific assessments of individuals and events in Russia's spiritual history, and even more profoundly on the implications of Russia's past for its present spiritual and political problems. Their ideas deserve attention.

Until very recently, most of those cultural and national debates were conducted among the intelligentsia on the pages of "thick" journals. In the past year or two, however, formal organizations have emerged seeking to promote their respective visions of a culturally-defined Russia among the general public. One might see in these emerging structures initial attempts to give an institutional shape to the different ideas of Russia. It is evident that these organizations are characterized by diverse approaches to the questions of Russian national identity, the territorial shape of "Russia," and the empire.

Remembering that such distinctions lack precision, especially because a certain overlap is evident in the positions of the groups in question, let us first mention those that concentrate their attention on Russian culture broadly defined but make it clear that they do not claim for Russia any special position in relation to the other nationalities in the Soviet Union.

One such organization was founded in June 1989 under the name of "National [or People's] Home of Russia" (*Narodnyy dom Rossii*). The "National Home" expressly limits its sphere of operation to the RSFSR, and its program aims at "the revival of the spiritual, social, cultural, and socio-economic life of the Russian Federation." It wants to achieve this goal by freeing the energies of a society that had for long lived under "the oppression of a totally prohibitive system."[31]

Another Russian national initiative that emphasizes its autonomy from the state is the "Russian Encyclopedia Cultural Center." The projected Russian encyclopedia is to be devoted to all aspects of Russian history, culture, and civilization, and will not attempt to be a universal encyclopedia of the kind represented by the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* or the comprehensive encyclopedias published in the union republics. The Russian encyclopedia planners insist on their independence from the state.[32]

John Dunlop draws attention to two other recent nationalist initiatives in the cultural area. Both are remarkably political—not to say "imperial"—in their "cultural" concerns. One of these is called "Foundation for Slavic Writing and Slavic Cultures" (*Fond slavyanskoy pis'mennosti i slavyanskikh kul'tur*) and includes among its founders individuals whom Dunlop calls "conservative Russian nationalists." As he puts it, the Foundation is "pan-Slavic in orientation."[33] Dunlop notes that the Foundation, launched in March 1989, has among its more than 80 sponsoring organizations the Writers' Union of the RSFSR as well as those of Ukraine and Belorussia, the academies of sciences of Ukraine and Belorussia, as well as numerous Russian and general Soviet organizations. He thinks that the "de facto goal of the new organization appears to be to cement relations among Russians, Ukrainians, and Belorussians." Only secondarily, according to Dunlop, is the Foundation concerned with Slavic and/or Orthodox nations abroad.

Dunlop quotes from a statement by Dmitriy Balashov, "the well-known Russian nationalist historical writer," who expressed this view: "The question of the day . . . is

[30]Feliks Dymov, "Permit Whatever Is Not Forbidden!" *Literaturnaya Rossiya*, No. 24, June 17, 1988, p. 3. See also a report on the symposium, (whose participants included D. S. Likhachev and N. A. Tolstoy), "A Great City with a Provincial Fate?" *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (Moscow), Mar. 2, 1988, p. 10.

[31]S. Galayeva, "'National Home of Russia'," *Literaturnaya Rossiya*, No. 25, June 23, 1989, p. 18.

[32]See the interview with the chairman of the board, corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Sciences Oleg Trubachev, in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, Mar. 22, 1989, p. 5; and a report entitled "Plans for a Russian Encyclopedia," *Literaturnaya Rossiya*, Apr. 14, 1989, p. 3.

[33]John B. Dunlop, "Two Noteworthy Russian Nationalist Initiatives," RFE-RL, *Report on the USSR* (Munich), No. 21, May 26, 1989, p. 3.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

whether the 'supra-ethnic' state created by ethnic Russians can be preserved." It would be lamentable, Balashov said, "if the miracle of Russian statehood should be consumed by 'chaos'." This and similar statements led Dunlop to the following general observation: "Conservative Russian nationalists are concerned about the future political fragmentation of the Soviet empire. They are attempting to shore up the Eastern Slav nucleus of the USSR."[34]

The other organization discussed by Dunlop is the "Association of Russian Artists," also organized in early 1989. Dunlop notes that the Association's primary aim is to "combat separatist minority nationalist tendencies threatening the unity of the Soviet Union," and he quotes from a declaration of the Association to support his assessment:

The once-powerful union of the peoples of Russia, joined together by the idea of steadfast unity, is experiencing a difficult period, during which, under the guise of demagogic slogans, nationalist groups are seeking to break up and destroy the unity of peoples.[35]

Recently, Boris Tsarev, the Association's business manager, declared that the organization supported the free development of all nationalities even though its own focus was on Russian culture. The Association firmly defends the unity of the USSR, which it views as a product of historical development that has produced a "brotherhood" of all peoples living in a common state. Tsarev warned the non-Russian nationalities against (unnamed) elements who work for the destruction of the USSR and aspire to establish their domination "over all nations."[36]

At least two other Russian nationalist organizations also began their existence in the spring of 1989. The Union for Spiritual Rebirth of the Fatherland (*Soyuz dukhovnogo vozrozhdeniya Otechestva*) was officially organized in Moscow on March 16–17, 1989. According to *Moskovskiy Literator,* the organizing session was attended by some 200 delegates from "patriotic associations and organizations" of Moscow, Leningrad, the Volga region, the Urals, Siberia, Belorussia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan, as well as by representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church. The organization's listed "founders" included the *Sovetskaya Rossiya* Publishing House, the Lenin Library, the Scientific Council for Problems of Russian Literature in the USSR Academy of Sciences, a kolkhoz in Chuvashia, and "eight patriotic associations from regions of the Urals and Siberia."[37]

One week after the initial announcement, M. Antonov, president of the Union for Spiritual Rebirth, publicly explained the Union's goals. The Union expects resolution of the country's crisis "only on the condition that there is a moral rebirth of every nation of our great Fatherland." Only those patriotic organizations that have actually shown by deeds that they support socialism and the preservation of the independence of the country, and that support the party in its *perestroyka* policies, may join the Union. The manifesto of the Union, which was published next to Antonov's article, was directed to "Our compatriots, fellow Russian (*rossiyane*) brothers and sisters, all nations which have flourished in our Fatherland."[38]

Judging by the text of the Manifesto and Antonov's article, the Union is a strongly nationalistic, anti-Western, and anti-liberal body that appeals simultaneously to communist and Russian nationalist slogans. It would not be unfair to call the Union a national-socialist organization, envisioning the "Fatherland" as a multinational country led by the Russians. As if one such Union were not enough, many of the same organizations that sponsored the Union for Spiritual Rebirth were behind the establishment, also in March 1989 and also in Moscow, of yet another body, namely, the "Moscow Russian Patriotic Society 'Fatherland'." (*Moskovskoye russkoye patrioticheskoye obshchestvo "Otechestvo"*). The Moscow Society clearly sees itself as an ethnic organization, as shown by its use of the adjective *russkoye,* not *rossiyskoye,* the former being an ethnic or personal designation, the latter a territorial one in which non-Russian citizens of the Russian Republic can also be included. Its program advocates the establishment of a Russian (meaning the RSFSR) television network and a Russian academy of sciences, and several other causes. It stresses "military-patriotic education" and includes on its board at least one military officer.[39] In its stronger emphasis on Russian ethnicity, the Association differs from the Union for Spiritual Rebirth, which is clearly interested in extending its activities throughout the entire Soviet Union.

[34]Ibid., pp. 3–4.

[35]*Moskovskiy Literator,* Dec. 16, 1988, p. 3, as quoted by John B. Dunlop.

[36]Boris Ivanovich Tsarev, "By the Force of Russian Brotherhood," *Literaturnaya Rossiya,* June 16, 1989, p. 11.

[37]*Moskovskiy Literator,* Mar. 24, 1989, p. 1; and *Literaturnaya Rossiya,* Mar. 31, 1989, p. 10.

[38]M. Antonov, "From the Standpoint of Socialism," *Moskovskiy Literator,* Mar. 31, 1989; and "Appeal of the Union of Spiritual Rebirth of the Fatherland," ibid.

[39]"Thinking of the Homeland, of Russia," *Literaturnaya Rossiya,* Mar. 31, 1989, p. 10; and "Fatherland—the Highest Good," ibid., June 23, 1989, p. 14. The former source calls the organization a "movement" (*dvizheniye*); the latter, a "society" (*obshchestvo*).

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This brief and of necessity superficial review of recent Russian initiatives nevertheless reveals a rise in nationalist sentiment and concerns and testifies at the same time to the continuing confusion about what kind of country it is that the Russians are envisaging. Some of the positions mentioned here closely parallel those of empire-savers, although the empire-savers prefer to call themselves Soviet rather than Russian, even when they really mean Russian. Other positions are more clearly concerned with Russia proper, the RSFSR. But those "culturalist" nationalists who stress the Orthodox religious factor and who emphasize the Russians' ties to their fellow Slavs appear to be rather oblivious to the fact that the Russian Republic is the homeland of several Muslim nations, including the Volga Tatars, who form a large nation not only by RSFSR but also by all-Union standards. The culturalists' neglect of the non-Slavs within Russia, and their accenting of Ukrainian and Belorussian affinity with the Russians—some of them imply that the three nations are really one—seem to betray an "empire-saving" rather than a "nation-building" orientation.

Russia as a democratic nation-state. The third model of Russia is that which is beginning to take shape in the thinking of the activists and theorists of the national democratic movement of Russia. As of the summer of 1989, the Russian democratic movement has not created all-Russia structures comparable to those already existing in the Baltic states or even those emerging in Ukraine and Belorussia. But "popular" or "national" fronts have already been created in the Urals, in Yaroslavl', Leningrad, and most recently, in Moscow. It is only a matter of time, one imagines, before they coalesce into a *Russian* popular front.

It is also conceivable that these fronts will unite to proclaim the establishment of an "all-Union"—rather than a Russian—popular front, thus setting up the Russians in a position of leadership once again. If this happens, Russian democrats will be following in the footsteps of the Bolsheviks as well as of their democratic predecessors in pre-1917 Russia, who until the very last declined to identify themselves simply as "Great Russians." On this subject, the recollections of Paul Milyukov, written in the 1920's, are very revealing. He recalled how before the 1917 revolution, non-Russian nationalists asked the Russian democratic intelligentsia to redefine its national identity as a precondition for cooperation. In asking the Russians to become "Great Russian," i.e., to define themselves in ethnic terms rather than as a group representing the whole empire, the non-Russians argued that this redefinition would make it possible for all parties to act as equals. But by defining themselves as "Russian" in an imperial rather than a national sense, in the view of the non-Russians, Russian democrats were making a claim to superiority and leadership (*pervenstvo*) over the other nationalities. In Milyukov's retrospective view, the Russian intelligentsia could not have acted other than it did, since yielding to those demands required "undoing" Russian history.[40] In other words, it required denying legitimacy to that product of Russian history that Milyukov and his fellow intellectuals really valued—the empire.

Will the Russian intelligentsia in the 1990's agree to do what its predecessors refused to do in the 1900's? The article by Balakhonov mentioned earlier is remarkable for addressing, in the most explicit manner possible, the necessity to dissociate the Russian nation from imperial ambitions, thereby possibly giving the answer that Milyukov was unable to give.[41] If Balakhonov's proposal for the solution of the "Russian question" were implemented, it would not only allow the non-Russian peoples of the USSR to become free but, in the words of Milovan Djilas, would also mean "the emancipation of the Russian nation from the present (and often unwillingly borne) burdens of empire." In a conversation with George Urban, Djilas put his view of the Soviet-imperial versus Russian-national problem in the following way:

We are talking about the natural expiry of an unnatural tyrannical regime which is bound to come, as surely as the British and French empires had to face their demise when the time was ripe. The Russian people would benefit the most. They would gain a free and more prosperous life and yet remain, undoubtedly, a great nation. You see, the Communist system has forced the Russian people into a state of sulking introspection which seeks outlets in xenophobia, petulant demonstrations of national superiority—or, at the opposite end, maudlin admissions of national inferiority. I firmly believe that a reduced but self-confident, opened-up democratic Russian state would induce much less brooding in the Russian people and make them a happier race, to the extent that Russians can be happy. Imagine what would it mean for free men and women everywhere to see this last bastion of universal unfreedom go the way of all tyrannies.[42]

---

[40]P. N. Milyukov, *Natsional'nyy vopros—Proiskhozhdeniye natsional'nosti i natsional'nyye voprosy v Rossii* (The National Problem—The Origins of Nationality and National Problems in Russia), no place of publication, Biblioteka izdatel'stva "Svobodnaya Rossiya," 1925, pp. 116–17.

[41]Vladimir Balakhonov, "Preservation of the Empire or Self-Preservation by Way of National Sovereignty—the Main National Problem of the Russian People," *Russkaya Mysl'*, June 23, 1989, pp. 6–7.

(Fn. 42 is on page 26.)

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Let me summarize the most important points of the Balakhonov proposal—bearing in mind that at least some of his ideas are also being debated and presumably shared by the Democratic Union, which may well be the first major Russian political force that is both national (or "nationalist") and liberal, pro-Western, and democratic. For complex and deep historical reasons, Balakhonov argues, Russian national consciousness has become tied to the idea of empire (which also happens to be an autocratic, centralized state). In these deep historical recesses he sees the source of the most recent expressions of "imperial ideology." Balakhonov also thinks that the extremist positions of *Pamyat'* are rooted in an imperial-statist outlook.

The primary task of the Russian nation, Balakhonov writes, should be to reshape its national consciousness. The Russians need to fathom the value of democracy and to see that Russia's "voluntary withdrawal from the 'large empire' of the USSR" will be beneficial to the Russian people. The Russians ought to understand, too, that the "'small empire'—the RSFSR," which he says forms the core of the "large empire," should also be dismantled.

Specifically, Balakhonov proposes the formation of three or four Russian-speaking states out of those parts of the RSFSR where the Russians predominate. Those democratic and sovereign states would include: (1) Russia proper, embracing Moscow and historic Russian lands to the west of the Urals, where the Great Russians and the Russian state were originally formed; (2) West Siberia; (3) East Siberia (although he takes into account the possibility that there would be a single Siberian state); (4) the Russian Far East. Balakhonov thinks that the creation of independent states in Siberia and the Far East would enable the Russian nation to participate in, and benefit from, the development of the "Pacific Community" in the 21st century. In any case, he is sure that the dismantling of the empire would benefit both the non-Russians and the Russians themselves. Indeed, he thinks that some Russians already acknowledge this possibility: "Both in Russian Siberia and in the Far East, voices are already heard in favor of their economic, state-political, and cultural autonomy, in favor of reducing their dependence on the supercentralized administration."[43]

But Balakhonov recognizes that his plans are not likely to win mass support in the foreseeable future. He therefore thinks that the most urgent task is to advance a restructuring of the Russian people's consciousness, because most Russians still remain under the influence of an imperial mentality. "The imperial instinct of the Russians is exceptionally strong, and as yet, we simply do not imagine a form of existence other than the framework of the present empire from Brest to Vladivostok." Because the Russians themselves have not been under foreign rule for many centuries, they do not understand what national oppression means and accordingly do not sympathize with the national-liberation movements of dependent nations. Nevertheless, the Russians will have to accept the fall of the empire as a result of which they will become free themselves—or they can try to preserve the empire but in doing so they will deprive themselves of freedom. The latter course might ultimately lead to the rise of a "great-power Russian Nazism."[44]

Balakhonov's is not a lone voice. *Atmoda,* the newspaper of the National Front of Latvia, recently published a speech before the Baltic Assembly by Boris Rakitskiy, vice-president of the Soviet Sociological Association. As quoted in *Literaturnaya Rossiya,* Rakitskiy said:

The Russian democratic movement, I assure you, is concerned now precisely with its inability to penetrate into the thicket of popular consciousness in order to try to root out its imperial component. This consciousness is great-power consciousness in form, but slavish in content. But we are working, we are trying on our part to support your efforts.[45]

In his article "To Russian Society on Russian Problems," Aleksandr Kazakov called upon his compatriots to stop identifying their fatherland with the state and "the authority." The Russian people have to learn, Kazakov said, not to mistake their love for their native land with love of the state and its political, military, and economic might. The Russians should work above all for "the revival of a national Russia" (*natsional'naya Rossiya*).[46]

It is impossible to determine at this stage how widely ideas like Balakhanov's, Rakitskiy's, or Kazakov's are supported. Balakhonov himself began to speak out in the 1970's in favor of dismantling the Soviet empire and replacing it by a Russian democratic nation-state as one of the empire's successors—and was punished for it at the time. Irrespective of how widely his ideas are shared, he is certainly right in paying attention to the political prospects of regional movements within the

[42]"Djilas on Gorbachev (II): Milovan Djilas and George Urban in Conversation," *Encounter* (London), November 1988, p. 30.

[43]Balakhonov, loc. cit., p. 6. Suggestions about subdividing the RSFSR have appeared in an official Moscow weekly, *Literaturnaya Gazeta.* See Vladimir Sokolov, "Democracy and Borders: Concepts," Aug. 2, 1989.

[44]Ibid., p. 7.

[45]*Literaturnaya Rossiya,* June 30, 1989, p. 14.

[46]Ibid.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Russian Republic, including those in the ethnically-Russian core of the RSFSR.

If the Russian nation ever frees itself of its "imperial mentality," by which Balakhonov and his fellow-thinkers claim it is dominated, this will not happen as a consequence of some kind of massive intellectual revolution originating in Moscow or Leningrad. It is more realistic to suppose that the change will begin along the path that many are apparently already taking in "the provinces," where regional "popular fronts," like those already formed in the Urals, various Siberian centers, and in European Russian provincial capitals, are being established.

Some signs point to a democratic Russian nationalism—a democratic Russian national consciousness—taking shape in organized form. The Democratic Union appears to be a Russian, not an "all-Union," organization. On March 12, 1989, it held a demonstration in honor of the first Revolution of 1917, and the participants, according to *The New York Times,* carried Russian flags of a pre-Soviet vintage. Just as the Balts and the Ukrainians celebrate various dates in 1918 as their national independence days, so democratic Russians seem to have adopted the March 1917 anniversary as a Russian national holiday to mark their nation's emancipation from tsarism.[47]

March 1917 is not a date Russian nationalists in the RSFSR Writers' Union (not to mention the *Pamyat'* Society or its fellow travelers) would choose for a Russian national holiday. Some of them are more critical of those who overthrew the tsar in March 1917 than they are of those who seized power in November 1917.[48] It is easy to understand why this should be so: the liberals, radicals, and democrats inaugurated the disintegration of the empire; the Bolsheviks restored it.

Non-Russian Responses

The debate about Russia's identity is not an internal Russian national affair. The questions that the Russians ask themselves also evoke reactions from their fellow citizens of other nationalities. One type of response relates to the status of the RSFSR. Another deals with the Russian ideas about relations between the Russian nation and the two other East Slavic nations. Most important of all is the question of Russian versus Soviet identity. It is under this last rubric that Russian-Jewish relations are being debated.

Those Russian nation-builders who think of the Russian republic solely as the national homeland of the Russians seem to pay scant attention to the fact that the RSFSR includes about 20 autonomous republics, including the Tatar, Bashkir, Daghestan, and Yakut ASSR's. Those Russian culturalists who are preoccupied with the question of Slavic unity, especially East Slavic unity, and stress the religious, Orthodox contribution to Russian identity, also seem oblivious to the fact that even if the Russian nation as they define it is Slavic and Orthodox-Christian (the latter at least in tradition), many millions of citizens of Russia (the RSFSR) are neither Slavic nor Orthodox.

It is commonly known that the coterie of ethnic Russian nationalists grouped around *Nash Sovremennik* is anti-Semitic. *Nash Sovremennik* had also been involved in conflicts with Georgian writers. But, as Julia Wishnevsky has noted, the non-Russian members of the RSFSR Writers' Union, especially Tatars and members of the nationalities of the Soviet North, also have made it clear that they have "no time for Russian nationalism." At the 1988 RSFSR Writers' Union plenum, they protested about discrimination against their nations in favor of Russians in their ethnic homelands, in wages, occupations, and cultural matters. They also objected to discrimination within the RSFSR Writers' Union itself, pointing out that *Nash Sovremennik,* the journal of the Union, did not have a single non-Russian on its editorial board.[49]

Some non-Russians propose that the RSFSR should become a real federation, which it is in name but not even in its formal constitutional structure. The so-called autonomous republics do not enjoy any autonomy, and most of the Republic, considered as ethnic Russian territory, does not have any even formally autonomous organs. To correct this problem, a deputy from the Evenki autonomous district to the Congress of People's Deputies proposed the establishment in the Russian Republic parliament of two chambers: a chamber of the Republic and a chamber of Nationalities.[50]

The Tatars, Russia's largest non-Russian nation, wish to go farther in trying to improve their position. In late 1988, the journal of the Tatar party committee, *Slovo Agitatora,* published a draft of the program of the "Tatar Civic Center," which is the Tatar counterpart to the national fronts familiar from the Baltic republics. The draft demanded that the sovereign rights "of the people of the Tatar ASSR" be realized, that the people of "Tatarstan" be equitably represented in the government of the USSR and RSFSR, and that the rights of the Tatar

[47] *The New York Times,* Mar. 13, 1989.

[48] Julia Wishnevsky, "*Nash Sovremennik* Provides Focus for 'Opposition Party'," *Report on the USSR,* Jan. 20, 1989, p. 30.

[49] Ibid., pp. 5–6.

[50] M. I. Mongo, *Pravda,* June 7, 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ASSR be gradually widened, eventually making Tatarstan a union republic.[51] In May 1989, the congress of the Tatar ASSR Writers' Union unanimously voted to ask an upcoming plenum of the CPSU Central Committee to grant the Tatar ASSR the status of union republic. It was noted at the congress that only 12 percent of Tatar children in Tataria study Tatar in school, and only 7 percent of Tatar children in the entire RSFSR do so. The Tatars clearly hope that this situation will change for the better if their republic is raised in status. Among other issues discussed were matters of history: speakers called for a reassessment of an official condemnation of the "Sultan-Galievist" national deviation and for the repudiation of the 1944 CPSU resolution that branded Tatar history of the medieval period (the period of the "Mongol Yoke" in Russia) as "reactionary."[52]

Acknowledging the validity of many complaints of the non-Russian nationalities (of which those cited above are only examples), a group of Russian writers, including M. Alekseyev, V. Belov, Yu. Bondarev, and V. Rasputin, published an appeal entitled "We have a Common Fate." The writers thanked various Bashkir, Tatar, Chuvash, and Mari writers by name for not blaming the Russian nation for their own nations' plight. The Russian authors also issued a call for the restoration of national and cultural rights, including language rights, to all nations living in Russia. They specifically endorsed a prompt establishment of a Tatar newspaper in Moscow, "where hundreds of thousands of Tatars live." They called on regional Russian-language literary journals as well as local radio and television to cover the life of "fraternal nations."[53]

However welcome these declarations may be to the non-Russians of the RSFSR, it is doubtful that they address their most important concerns. And, in any case, statements in defense of the Tatars or the Peoples of the North need to be weighed against those which emphasize the Slavic and Orthodox character of "Russia." This in itself would tend to promote a sense of second-class citizenship among the non-Russians. There is no evidence suggesting that many influential Russians are prepared to accept today the ideas of Eurasianism, a current in Russian cultural and political thought in the 1920's–1930's that proposed to redefine Russian identity in a fundamental manner by establishing a new entity of "Eurasia." In it, the Russians were to be fully equal with the peoples of the former empire's Asian possessions, such as the Volga Tatars. The only well-known figure who speaks in favor of Eurasian ideas today, but without calling himself a Eurasian, is Lev Gumilev.[54]

As might be expected, the resurgence of Russian nationalism, which expressed itself in the publication on a mass scale of such Russian 19th-century historians as Nikolay Karamzin (1766–1826), Sergey Solov'yev (1820–79), and Vasiliy Klyuchevskiy (1841–1911), was watched with great attention by the Ukrainian intelligentsia. However gratifying the works of these and other historians might be to Russian national feeling, they are bound to displease the Ukrainians, who think of themselves as a separate nation from the Russians. The Russian history presented by these pre-1917 scholars is one that assumes that all Eastern Slavs are, and have been throughout their history, one Russian nation—albeit with regional differences and characteristics—which found its authentic expression in the tsarist state. In other words, these Russian histories of the pre-1917 period, which are now becoming accessible to the general public, are helping those who favor an imperial model of Russia. Karamzin believed that the tsarist state was the most perfect expression of the national character of Russia, and even the title of his magnum opus, *History of the Russian State,* conveys this idea. In the words of Anatole G. Mazour, Karamzin's work "is not even a history of the state—it is a rhetorical, panegyrical narrative that endeavors to prove the autocracy alone has bestowed all the blessings that the Russian Empire ever enjoyed." Mazour quotes the famous Pushkin epigram on Karamzin to illustrate how the contemporaries of the historian understood the political message of his work:

In his "History," beauty and simplicity
Prove without bias
The necessity of Autocracy
And the charm of the whip.[55]

Bearing some of these things in mind, one can appreciate why members of the Ukrainian intelligentsia responded to the revival of interest in Russian history by asking questions similar to that of Pavlo Zahrebel'nyi, an establishment figure par excellence:

There is much talk these days about Russian patriotism. . . . But has anyone ever said anything about

[51]"Theses for the Preparation of a Platform of the Tatar Civic Center," *Slovo Agitatora* (Kazan'), Nos. 23–24, December 1988, pp. 34–35.

[52]Kamilla Yunusova, "Responsibility, As Never Before," *Literaturnaya Rossiya,* June 2, 1989, p. 10.

[53]Ibid., May 26, 1989, p. 5.

[54]For a discussion of Eurasianism see my "The Search for Identity in Russia and Eastern Europe," *Cross-Currents: A Yearbook of Central European Culture* (Ann Arbor, MI), No. 9, forthcoming in 1990.

[55]Anatole G. Mazour, *Modern Russian Historiography,* Westport, CT, Greenwood Press, 1975, pp. 81 and 85.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ukrainian patriotism? Now, when the histories written by Klyuchevskiy, Solov'yev, and Karamzin are being re-published, perhaps we should raise the matter of re-publishing The History of Ukraine-Rus' *by Mykhaylo Hrushevs'kyi, on the pages of which issues of Ukrainian patriotism are elucidated.*[56]

Mykhaylo Hrushevsky (1866–1934), unlike Karamzin and the latter's Russian successors, Solov'yev and Klyuchevskiy, was not a "statist" but a "populist" and a "federalist." While working as professor of Ukrainian history at the University of L'viv (then in Austria's province of Galicia), where he was appointed in 1894, Hrushevsky became active in many scholarly projects, the most important of which was a multi-volume history of Ukraine. Hrushevsky's life was dedicated to demonstrating that the Ukrainian people, who, he thought, constituted a society distinct from the state, have had a history of their own, even when they lacked a state. That history should not be subsumed under some artificial formula of a broader "all-Russian" or imperial history. (Hrushevsky thought that the history of the Russian people also should not be reduced to the history of the Muscovite and imperial state, and his position on this subject had sympathizers among Russian historians.)

Hrushevsky was also a political activist. In March 1917, he became the head of the Ukrainian Central Rada and held that post until the overthrow of the Rada in the Skoropadsky coup of May 1918. During Hrushevsky's tenure, Ukraine proclaimed its independence from Russia in January 1918 and then signed a peace treaty with Germany and Austria-Hungary at Brest-Litovsk in February 1918. (The Soviets signed "their" Brest treaty in March.) In 1924, with Moscow's consent, Hrushevsky returned to Kiev from his Vienna exile. As was to be expected, he again played a highly visible public role. But as Stalin launched his attack on Ukraine, Hrushevsky was exiled in 1931 to Moscow. He died under somewhat mysterious circumstances in 1934.

Hrushevsky had been attacked even in his lifetime, but after his death he became a symbol of Ukrainian "bourgeois nationalism" and "fascism." After 1937, no work by Hrushevsky was published in the USSR and the historian's name gradually disappeared from books and journals. A modest attempt to bring Hrushevsky into the realm of scholarly and public discussion was made in the 1960's, but it ended soon and in any case never resulted in the re-publication of his writings. In the 1970's, Ukrainian scholars were simply forbidden even to mention his name.[57] This background information allows one to appreciate the significance of Zahrebel'nyi's "raising the matter" of Hrushevsky in 1988. Zahrebel'nyi's question has since been answered in the affirmative in his homeland. The most important work of Hrushevsky, his 10-volume history of "Ukraine-Rus'," has not been republished, but some of his other writings have been serialized in literary journals.[58]

Literary journals have become the forum for what amounts to a Ukrainian-Russian debate on a number of questions, including the legacy of Kievan Rus'. The debate on Kievan Rus' began when a corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, O. Trubachev, declared that it should be called a Russian, and not an "East Slavic" state, and that its culture, including its language, should be called Russian.[59]

One might add that the Russian-Ukrainian dispute about Kiev is not limited to the question of its identity in the Middle Ages. A leading Moscow journal, *Novyy Mir,* in its April 1989 issue published a selection of essays by the prominent Russian historian and philosopher G. P. Fedotov (1886–1951), including the previously unpublished "Three Capitals." That essay contains the following passage about the third of the three capitals in question, which touches on the very essence of the Ukrainian-Russian relationship:

It seems strange to speak about Kiev in our times. Until very recently, we ourselves used to renounce Kiev's glory and infamy, tracing our descent from [the

[56]"For the Sake of Restructuring—a Creative Initiative" *Literaturna Ukraina* (Kiev), July 28, 1988. Whether he knew it or not, Zahrebel'nyi rephrased the famous question asked by the Ukrainian Communist writer Mykola Khvylovyi in the 1920's: "Is Russia independent?—It is? Well, then Ukraine is independent too."

[57]For Hrushevsky's life, times, and writings, see Thomas M. Prymak, *Mykhailo Hrushevsky: The Politics of National Culture,* Toronto, Buffalo, and London, University of Toronto Press, 1987, and his "Hrushevsky and the Ukraine's 'Lost' History," *History Today* (London), January 1989, pp. 42–46. On the prohibition to mention Hrushevsky's name in Ukraine (but not in Russia, where scholars had been free to cite his writings), see Vasyl' Skurativs'kyi, "Protective Immunity—Ethnography," *Literaturna Ukraina,* July 21, 1988, pp. 3 and 5. Without saying so directly, Skurativs'kyi implies that the ban on Hrushevsky's name went into effect when Petro Shelest was replaced by V. V. Shcherbyts'kyi as Ukrainian Communist Party first secretary. Two contrasting stands on the Ukrainian historian and politician are revealed in Serhiy Bilokin', "Hrushevs'kyi," ibid.; and V. Sarbey, "How Are We to Treat M. Hrushevs'kiy," *Radyans'ka Ukraina* (Kiev), Aug. 27, 1988. Bilokin' treats Hrushevsky in the same way as the non-Marxist historians of Russia are treated in Russia. Sarbey views the historian primarily as a dangerous enemy of the Soviet state, although he, too, recognizes the scholarly value of Hrushevsky's work.

[58]See Mykhailo Hrushevs'kyi, "Memoirs," *Kyiv* (Kiev), No. 9, 1988, pp. 115–49, and subsequent issues; and idem, "The Cultural-National Movement in Ukraine in the 16th–17th Centuries," *Zhovten'* (L'viv), No. 1, 1989 (and subsequent issues). *Vitchyzna* (Kiev) began the publication of Hrushevsky's work dealing with the Cossack period in its January 1989 issue.

[59]O. Trubachev, "The Slavs: Their Language and History," *Pravda,* Mar. 27, 1987.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

banks of] *the Oka and the Volga* [rivers]. *We ourselves gave Ukraine away to Hrushevsk'kyi and paved the way for Ukrainian separatists. Did Kiev ever occupy the center of our thought, of our love? A striking fact: modern Russian literature has completely left Kiev out.*[60]

As for the debate inaugurated by Trubachev, it has since moved to a literary journal published in Moscow, *Druzhba Narodov*.[61] The debate has expanded in scope to examine traditional Russian attitudes toward the Ukrainian language, culture, and history. A young Ukrainian critic, Mykola Ryabchuk, listed among those Russians of the past who had denied the Ukrainians the right to consider themselves a nation no less a figure than Vissarion Belinsky.[62] Another literary critic, Serhiy Hrechanyuk, linked Trubachev's ideas with those of a pre-1917 enemy of the Ukrainians, N. S. Shchegol'yev, the author of a notorious anti-Ukrainian tract, "The Ukrainian Movement as a Contemporary Stage of South-Russian Separatism," described by some as a "textbook for policemen."[63]

The feeling among the nationally conscious Ukrainian intelligentsia that the basic problems of the Ukrainians in the USSR today have less to do with Marxism or even Marxism-Leninism, and more with the traditional Russian conceptions about Ukraine was considerably reinforced when a Kiev Komsomol daily, *Moloda Hvardiya,* published an essay by Vladimir I. Vernadsky, "The Ukrainian Question and Russian Public Opinion." Vernadsky, known to the world primarily as a Russian scientist, was also a Ukrainian patriot who became in 1918 the first president of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences established under Hetman Skoropadsky. The article in question was apparently written in 1915 but not published previously. In it, Vernadsky reviewed the history of the Ukrainian-Russian relationship from the Union of Pereyaslav until the outbreak of World War I. His leitmotif was that both the Russian state and Russian liberal society had consistently sought to diminish and eventually to obliterate a separate Ukrainian national identity. The Vernadsky text created something of a sensation when it was published in 1988, and it has been reprinted in the chief literary monthly, *Vitchyzna,* and in several regional newspapers.[64]

All these themes were synthesized by Ivan Dzyuba in an article called "Do We Conceive of National Culture as a Totality?" which appeared in the cultural weekly, *Kul'tura i Zhyttya,* in early 1989.[65] (Dzyuba was jailed in the early 1970's for arguing in his 1965 book *Internationalism or Russification?* that Ukrainian culture should be allowed to develop into a full-fledged, complete, and modern national culture, and not treated as an ethnographic, provincial version of a higher "all-Russian" culture, and for asserting that there was continuity between the tsarist and the Soviet treatment of Ukraine.) Even more surprising, the Kiev article was reprinted, at the end of 1988, in *Kommunist,* the CPSU's main theoretical journal.[66] The publication of Dzyuba's article in *Kommunist* would support the view that some influential circles in Moscow favor a reconsideration of traditional Russian notions on Ukrainian nationality.

The view that Stalinism, Khrushchevism, and Brezhnevism-Suslovism (these designations are used in the Ukrainian press) continued tsarist policies toward Ukraine is expressed with increasing openness. Borys Kharchuk, for example, claimed to see a direct and uninterrupted line from Peter the Great's ban on Ukrainian printing in 1720, to Alexander II's decrees of 1863 and 1876 (which respectively restricted and banned the use of Ukrainian in publishing), to Stalinist and Brezhnevian anti-Ukrainian measures.[67]

Borys Oliynyk, a poet in good standing with the authorities who was elected deputy to the USSR People's

---

[60]G. P. Fedotov, "Three Capitals," *Novyy Mir,* No. 4, 1989, p. 215.

[61]Trubachev in *Druzhba Narodov* (Moscow), No. 5, 1988, and his response in "On the Union of Language and Other Matters," ibid., No. 9, 1988, pp. 261–64. The same issue contained several critical letters from readers, including one by Bohdan Sen'kiv, who argued that Trubachev's stand implies the subordinate position of the Ukrainian and Belorussian languages vis-à-vis the Russian language in the Ukrainian and Belorussian republics.

Druzhba Narodov's opening of its pages to Ukrainian contributors is important because Ukrainian journals are printed in incomparably fewer copies and, in any case, are not read by the Russian public.

[62]Mykola Ryabchuk, "Ukrainian Literature and the Little Russian 'Image'," ibid., No. 5, 1988, pp. 250–54. On Belinsky's view of the Ukrainians, see Victor Svoboda, "Shevchenko and Belinsky," in George Luckyj, Ed., *Shevchenko and the Critics,* Toronto, Toronto University Press, 1980, pp. 303–23, and Svoboda and Richard Martin, "Shevchenko and Belinsky Revisited," *Slavonic and East European Review* (London), Vol. 56, 1978, pp. 546–62. (I would like to thank Dr. David Saunders for bringing these references to my attention and for his comments on an earlier draft of this paper.)

[63]Serhiy Hrechanyuk, "Trubachev Goes on a Campaign Against 'US,' or the Mythical Grandma and the Troubadours of a Modernized Shchegolevshchina," *Vitchyzna,* No. 12, 1988, pp. 196–200.

[64]V. I. Vernadskyi (Vernadsky), "The Ukrainian Question and Russian Public Opinion," *Moloda Hvardiya* (Kiev), Mar. 12, 1988. For an English translation, see *Soviet Ukrainian Affairs* (London), No. 2, 1988. *Vitchyzna* published the whole Vernadsky text in its June 1988 issue. Since 1988, the Ukrainian press has published a number of Vernadsky texts from the period 1917–18, when he was engaged in the organization of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. This Vernadsky revival has led in turn to the admission that the Academy was founded when Ukraine was a formally independent state. See M. Dobrov et al., "A New Look at the History of the Founding of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences," *Visnyk Akademii Nauk URSR* (Kiev), No. 4, 1989, pp. 58–74.

[65]*Kul'tura i Zhyttya* (Kiev), Jan. 24, 1988. The Ukrainian text was republished in *Nauka i Kul'tura: Ukraina* (Kiev), No. 22, 1988, pp. 309–25.

[66]I. Dzyuba, *Kommunist,* No. 18, December 1988, pp. 51–60.

[67]Borys Kharchuk, "The Word and the Nation," *Prapor* (Kharkiv), No. 10, 1988, reprinted in *Suchasnist'* (Munich), No. 3, 1989, pp. 113–26.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Congress from the Communist Party list, stressed wryly in a speech commemorating Taras Shevchenko, the great 19th-century Ukrainian poet, that the same poems of Shevchenko were banned under the tsars and under Stalin and Brezhnev, and had become available to the Ukrainian public only under *glasnost'*. "Isn't this a striking coincidence?" he asked.[68]

Those Shevchenko poems (or parts of poems) that were not published until quite recently dealt with the relations of Russia and Ukraine from the times of Bohdan Khmelnyts'kyi in the mid-17th century, through the era of Ivan Mazepa and Peter the Great in the early 18th century, to the reign of Catherine II at the end of that century. Shevchenko condemned Khmelnyts'kyi for entering into what Soviet historiography likes to call the "re-union of Ukraine with Russia" (1654), and had harsh words for Peter I and Catherine II. Thus, Peter "crucified Ukraine," and Catherine "finished off" her victim. Even before the "rehabilitation" of Shevchenko's banned poems, some Ukrainian literary figures—not official historians—undertook an attempt to rethink the heretofore totally negative assessment of Ivan Mazepa. Mazepa's alliance with Sweden's Charles XII in order to free Ukraine from its Russian connection, as is well known, ended at the Battle of Poltava (July 1709) with the rout of the combined Swedish-Cossack forces and was followed by Mazepa's exile and Peter's brutal suppression of Ukrainian autonomy. Ever since the mid-1930's, the official Soviet line has condemned Mazepa's "treason"—thus holding exactly the same view of the unlucky Hetman as apologists for tsarist Russia. (In tsarist Russia, Ukrainian nationalists, even mild autonomists, were called "Mazepists," which was a derogatory term denoting separatist and traitor.) However, in December 1988, two periodicals presented a new view of Mazepa. This was done by the publication of a poem of the late Volodymyr Sosyura originally written in the 1920's. (A fragment of the poem was published in 1929.) The Ukrainian poet, who continued to work on this poem as late as 1960, was aware that his approach to Mazepa was going against not only the party line but also Alexander Pushkin's famous work titled "Mazepa." But, Sosyura wrote, "O Pushkin, I love you but I love truth even more." Sosyura compared Mazepa with George Washington as a leader who fought for his country. The publication of the poem was accompanied by articles that took a somewhat more cautious line but in the end agreed that even if Mazepa betrayed Peter his actions did not necessarily mean that he also committed treason against Ukraine.[69]

This cautious attempt to explain Mazepa's action was subsequently challenged by a historian who argued that the designation of "traitor" did not apply at all to Mazepa. Mazepa owed loyalty to Ukraine, not to Russia or Peter, and was required to follow a policy he considered best for the Ukrainian people. If anyone, Peter was the traitor for he had violated the agreements Moscow had made with the Ukrainians in 1654.[70]

It is quite clear that these "historical" controversies and celebrations are really about the present status of Ukraine in the Soviet Union. Some commentators do not even pretend otherwise. Thus a Kharkiv writer, Radiy Polons'kyi, in an article written in late 1988, quotes from notes he made in 1974–77, which, he said, contained the following passage: "What used to be considered chauvinism and Ukrainophobia now is called internationalism. People whom Lenin used to call great-power bullies now call themselves Leninist-internationalists."[71] Such people, Polons'kyi went on, continue to be active in the period of *glasnost'* and *perestroyka*. Polons'kyi described Yevgeniy Primakov's project to develop "international structures" via a "rotation of cadres along horizontal lines" as a plan "to artificially mix nations." It is clear to Polons'kyi that "national nihilism" has supporters in high places.

In Polons'kyi's opinion, such a position derives from two different sources. One is the tsarist idea of "one and indivisible Russia" and comes from the past. The other source of inspiration to the "Brezhnevite-Suslovist" policy comes "from outside": the United States of America. The Brezhnevites were impressed by the American model because the American nation is based on a non-national—"extra-national"—principle, and because

---

[68]Speech by Borys Oliynyk, in *Literaturna Ukraina*, Mar. 16, 1989.

[69]Volodymyr Sosyura, "Mazepa: Fragments from a Poem," *Kul'tura i Zhyttya*, Dec. 18, 1988, p. 5, and idem, "Mazepa," *Kyiv*, No. 12, 1988, pp. 77–107. See also the articles by S. Halchenko and V. Serhiychuk in *Kul'tura i Zhyttya*, Dec. 18, 1988, and Yuriy Barabash, "Ivan Mazepa—One More Literary Version," ibid., pp. 140–49.

[70]Vasyl' Marochkin, "The Bitter Cup of Ivan Mazepa," *Ukraina* (Kiev), No. 25, 1989, pp. 14–16.

The Battle of Poltava polemic was not restricted to literary journals. The youth branch of *Pamyat'* Society, "Rossiya Molodaya" or "Young Russia" (its name is taken from a Pushkin poem, where he speaks of "young Russia reaching manhood with the genius of Peter") announced it would commemorate the battle in Poltava in July 1989. According to press accounts, about 300 activists of Young Russia arrived by train from Moscow. Before this happened, the July 9 event was discussed at a July 1 conference of the Kiev regional branch of the Popular Movement for Restructuring in Ukraine (*Rukh*). The head of the ideological department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, L. M. Kravchuk, reported at that meeting that the Ukrainian authorities had asked appropriate authorities in Moscow not to allow in Ukraine the celebration of the Poltava anniversary according to the scenario of "Rossiya Molodaya," which Kravchuk called the youth branch of the "ill-reputed *Pamyat'*." Indeed, the police sent the *Pamyat'* group back to Moscow after their arrival in Poltava. They also removed from the city those people from several Ukrainian cities who had arrived to protest. See *Literaturna Ukraina*, July 6, 1989, p. 1; ibid., July 13, 1989, p. 6; and *Svoboda* (Jersey City, NJ), July 20, 1989, p. 1.

[71]Radiy Polons'kyi, "If the Revolution Lives in the Heart," *Prapor*, No. 1, 1989, p. 146.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the American nation represents a conglomerate of peoples who are united by a common, English language. But "our pseudo-ideologists" have forgotten, says Polons'kyi, that "the great American nation" has behind it "powerful historico-geographic and socio-economic factors of long duration, and not armchair fantasies of power-hungry individuals." Second, and more important, the Brezhnevites "have ignored" the will of the Soviet peoples, including the unflinching will of Russia itself to remain Russia, and not to dissolve itself in a conglomerate. "As we now see," Polons'kyi observed, "they have not succeeded."[72]

Precisely because they fear for their own survival as a nation, the Ukrainians are among the most vocal supporters of the restoration of Russia as a full-fledged republic in the form of the RSFSR. The already quoted poet-politician Oliynyk, for example, went so far in defending Russia's rights as to complain that Russia did not have a separate seat in the United Nations, which it obviously much deserved. He also said that Russia needs its own Central Committee, its own academy, and all the rest.[73]

The theme of Russia as a republic like the others emerged especially strongly in the speeches of some Baltic deputies to the USSR Congress of People's Deputies. Jānis Peters from Latvia, for example, pointed out that the central agencies such as Gosplan also "violate the sovereignty" of Russia, and he wondered why the Russians themselves were not speaking up more in behalf of their republic. "Why is Russia afraid to become independent of the all-Union *diktat*?" Peters asked.[74]

In what was unquestionably the most remarkable analysis of the entire complex issue of the nationalities under the Soviet system presented at the Congress, the Estonian Deputy Klara Hallik argued that the interests of Russia, the Russian nation, also suffer under the "unnatural" and "antidemocratic" socialism that preserves "habits of imperial thinking."[75] Russian national consciousness suffers because of its "truncated" state structure, whose powers have been taken over by the organs of the USSR. Moscow rules Russia not as a country but as a conglomerate of regions, and Russian identity becomes diluted in an all-Union identity. This impedes Russia's national revival. The struggle against bureaucratic centralism that other republics are waging is, in consequence, mistaken for a struggle against Russia. If a full-fledged institutional structure were created in Russia, the majority of existing all-Union agencies and organizations will no longer be necessary.

Hallik also warned against the tendency to confuse integration with centralization and subordination. Only free nations can join the process of integration—and so the centralization being practiced in the USSR runs counter to natural tendencies toward integration. "Russia, let alone Moscow, cannot be considered a center even for Slavic languages, let alone Turkic, Baltic, or Finno-Ugric ones." Similarly, religion and the church are gaining in importance in the contemporary world, but Moscow, the state's capital, is the center for the Russian Orthodox Church alone. For the adherents of Islam, their centers are outside the borders of the state, as they are for Catholics and some other Christians. For Latvians and Estonians, the cultural attraction is to the Scandinavian countries in the Baltic. All Soviet nations should be free to contribute in their unique ways to world culture. Hallik questioned the meaning of various slogans applied to inter-nationality relations in the USSR, including "a strong center and strong republics." What is that "strong center of ours?" Hallik asked. Has some previously unknown "sixteenth republic" been formed in the USSR?[76]

Conclusions

There is no question that the Russian intelligentsia is giving much thought to the problems of Russian national identity, including the political issues involved in those problems. It is also clear that the non-Russians are pressing for a solution of the Russian problem by means of an institutional separation of Russia from the USSR as a prerequisite for overcoming "imperial thinking" and imperial practices in the Soviet Union.

What do "ordinary" Russians—the *russkiy narod*—think about the matter? Sergey Grigoryants started his recent article on "The Russian National Movement" in the following way: "As yet, a Russian national movement that could become the support of a future democratic state, does not exist in our country."[77] Although democratic organizations do exist among the Russians, they are relatively weak and often lack a clearly defined national outlook. Grigoryants, who thinks that *Pamyat'* represents the statist or imperial version of Russian national consciousness taken from the tsarist past, concedes that no counterweight to it has yet

[72]Ibid., p. 152.

[73]Quoted in Pavel Emelin, "The Energy of the Word: People's Deputies of the USSR Speak Out," *Literaturnaya Rossiya*, June 16, 1989.

[74]*Izvestiya*, June 4, 1989.

[75]*Pravda*, June 7, 1989.

[76]Ibid. Hallik did not say so, but the slogan "a strong center and strong republics" was coined by Gorbachev.

[77]Sergey Grigoryants, "The Russian National Movement," *Russkaya Mysl'*, No. 3775, May 12, 1989, p. 6.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

emerged that would be both democratic and national. In his view, the political spectrum lacks a force that would promote the cause of a democratic Russia, and focus on the fact that the Russians too are one of the nationalities of the Soviet Union and that their national needs should be met as well. Grigoryants's analysis cannot help but make a historian wonder if those democrats of his acquaintance are not behaving in the same way as did the pre-revolutionary Russian democrats in Milyukov's recollections.[78]

But other historical analogies come to mind as well. Especially suggestive are the parallels between the problem of "Russia" versus the Soviet state and the problem of German nationalism in the 19th-century Habsburg monarchy up to its fall in 1918. Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin drew such parallels in their book, *Wittgenstein's Vienna,* which was published in 1973. As in the present-day Soviet Union, in the Habsburg monarchy of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, all problems were conceptualized as "national" problems. Moreover, the Germans in the Habsburg monarchy—just as the Russians today—did not have certain political options available to other nations precisely because of their identification with the ruling center.[79]

A somewhat different parallel suggests itself from the experience of the Ottoman Empire, whose fall did result in the rise of a Turkish nation-state in the old territorial and political core of the empire. Moreover, much of its periphery had gradually "peeled away" even before the Ottoman Empire disintegrated. Whether "Ottomanization" is in fact a prospect for the Soviet Union in its "inner" empire is another matter, but Timothy Garton Ash believes it is already under way in the East European "outer" empire.[80]

The Soviet Union and Yugoslavia are heirs of the old Habsburg, Ottoman, and tsarist Russian monarchies in that both are facing a fundamental problem of reconciling within their borders nations with Christian and Islamic traditions and their profoundly contrasting ways of life and value systems, according to John A. Armstrong. Armstrong expects the Christian-Muslim conflict to become a major issue in the coming years not only in Yugoslavia, where it has already been visible for some time, but also in the USSR.[81]

The above may be suggestive and potentially fruitful leads for studying the Soviet nationality problem, but they do not offer any direct help in discerning trends among the population of Russian nationality. It may be useful, though, to keep in mind the Germans in Bohemia, Slovenia, and other regions of the Habsburg empire before 1918, where indigenous nationalist movements were a threat to the Germans not simply as Germans, i.e., as one of many ethnic groups, but also as representatives of imperial authority. If this analogy is followed up, then Grigoryants's comments on the Russian reactions in the Baltic area are worth noting. The rise of the "interfronts," or "international fronts," consisting mainly of Russians and other Russian-speaking immigrants, says Grigoryants, should be seen as an expression not of Russian national sentiment but of an "unquestionably Soviet" sentiment.[82] In other words, most Russians in Latvia or Estonia view themselves as representatives of the state, of the Soviet-imperial principle, and feel they are living in a potentially rebellious province. They do not view themselves as a (Russian) national minority living in a country that is different from Russia.

It would seem, therefore, that a democratic, "normal" Russian national consciousness has a better chance of emerging in Russia proper, perhaps by developing from some regional autonomist grass roots. There may be reason to see the workers movement in Siberia in the summer of 1989 in this light. It is evident that the striking miners objected not only to intolerable material conditions but equally strongly to the entire way of life to which they are condemned. They spoke up against bureaucracy, "colonialism," "domination by Moscow," and similar enemies. This would suggest that at stake there are relations between an imperial center and its dependent province.

What role did the intelligentsia have in this conflict? It so happens that in April 1989, there appeared an announcement of the establishment in Novosibirsk of a "Siberian Independent Information Agency." (That announcement was not printed in the official Soviet media.) The inaugural meeting of that "Agency" was attended by representatives of independent journals from Novosibirsk (three publications) and Omsk, as

[78]But this assessment may be too pessimistic. At least one contemporary critic, and moreover one who is not a friend of the democratic option, speaks of public opinion becoming split into two extremes, one being *Pamyat'*, the other—the Democratic Union. See Sergey Kurginyan, "On the Mechanics of Gliding Down" *Literaturnaya Rossiya,* July 7, 1989, p. 9, and July 14, 1989, p. 2.

[79]See Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna,* New York, Simon and Schuster, 1973, pp. 271–72. I discuss their thesis in my article, "Defining 'Central Europe': Power, Politics, and Culture," *Cross-Currents: A Yearbook of Central European Culture,* No. 1 (1982), pp. 30–38. For reflections on the German problem under the Habsburgs, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* London, Verso and NLB, 1983, p. 81.

[80]Timothy Garton Ash, "The Empire in Decay," *The New York Review of Books,* Sept. 29, 1988, p. 56.

[81]John A. Armstrong, "Toward a Framework for Considering Nationalism in East Europe," *Eastern European Politics and Societies* (Berkeley CA), Spring 1988, pp. 301–02.

[82]Grigoryants, loc. cit., p. 6.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

well as by "independent journalists" from Irkutsk, Krasnoyarsk, Novokuznetsk, Kemerovo, and Yakutsk. The declaration adopted at the meeting contains phrases that reveal a sense of a distinct Siberian identity and suggest that it may be assuming a political form. Thus, the declaration protests that Siberia, "which finds itself in a colonial dependence on Moscow authorities," has no mass media of its own and is subject to an "information *diktat*" by the all-Union publications. Siberia has to make do with regional media, but lacks media covering Siberia as a whole. It was in order to correct this lack of specifically Siberian media that the Siberian information agency was founded. The agency's organizers said they would be willing to cooperate professionally with international and national news services interested in covering Siberian affairs. They also hoped that the new agency would be supported by the "Siberian people" (*Sibirskiy narod*) as well as the authorities.[83]

Speeches at the April 1989 plenum of the CPSU Central Committee supplied another kind of evidence that social and economic problems are being perceived in Siberia as in essence problems of *regional* dependence on the center, which is viewed as the embodiment of the bureaucratic, command-administrative system. The plenum agenda was devoted to assessing the results of the March elections to the Congress of People's Deputies. The elections resulted in defeats of numerous party officials and regional bosses, notably in Leningrad, Moscow, and Kiev, the three largest cities of the Soviet Union. But as one of the losers, the Kemerovo oblast first secretary, noted, the biggest defeats of party officials happened in Siberia and the Far East, "from the Urals to the ocean." The secretary, A. G. Mel'nikov noted that the whole area—with 30 million inhabitants—suffered from profound social tensions, that "people have come to live much worse," and that the problems were "critical." Mel'nikov cited coal and oil output figures on Siberia's contribution to the economy and complained that despite its importance Siberia was not treated as a single unit but that its regions were separately managed by central agencies from Moscow, all employing administrative-command methods "because we still do not know of any other way" to manage. The only way out of the critical situation was to give Siberia its own rights, its economic and administrative autonomy, and to treat it as an economic partner—and so assure its contribution to the national economy.[84] The appropriateness of these warnings was confirmed by the Siberian strikes.

[83]"Creation of a Siberian Independent Information Agency," *Russkaya Mysl'*, Apr. 14, 1989, p. 2.

[84]*Pravda*, Apr. 27, 1989.

The key issues for Russian democratic nationalism are also key for all currents of Russian national consciousness. The one to which most attention has been devoted in this article is the attitude toward the state. The second issue, whose urgency and potential destructiveness is daily becoming more apparent, is the social and economic question broadly defined. This somewhat general and academic term covers the most serious and pressing matters of daily life for millions of people: health, ecology, food supplies or rather food shortages, education, wages, housing, work safety—the list goes on. The realization that in all these respects, the Soviet Union lags behind most of the developed world, even certain parts of the Third World, is universal in the Soviet Union. Among the Russians, this awareness is increasingly assuming the form of injured national feelings: "We, the Russians, who have suffered most, we who helped the others in the USSR, in Eastern Europe, Asia, Cuba, Africa, we are now poor and backward."

The resulting anger is directed against many targets. One obvious target is the state and party bureaucracy—"Moscow." Another—the nationalities, such as the Balts and the peoples of the Caucasus. Some elements are explaining the plight of Russia by accusing the "Jews, the internationalist Zionist conspiracy," or "the Masons." These extremists do not blame the state for the present crisis—and for the most part also not the communist ideology per se. Rather, they attribute the sins of the Soviet regime to the Jews who at one time or another occupied important posts in it, and by extension—to Jews as a people.

In such a situation it would seem imperative for the liberal and democratic Russian intelligentsia to make sure that the specifically national or nationalist Russian concerns and issues are not left to extremists of the *Pamyat'* kind. Against the right-wing models of Russia, which so prominently feature anti-Semitism and other forms of prejudice, the democrats and liberals need to propose their own democratic, tolerant, and progressive model of *Russia*. They cannot afford to ignore the specific Russian problem as they concern themselves with general social, economic, or political issues in somewhat abstract terms. In this regard, the Russian intelligentsia would do well to ponder the circumstances that in the 1920's had allowed the Fascists in Italy and the Nazis in Germany to capture considerable popular support by appealing to national sentiments and traditions.[85]

Clearly, the situation is very critical; and the intellectual and political confusion, overwhelming. The second question, therefore, that Russian nationalists, and everybody else in the Soviet Union, have to ask is: which

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ideology and program currently on "the market" will the masses accept as their own? Like so many thinking Russians are doing these days, Balakhonov quotes in his article the famous Pushkin lines expressing the poet's dread of "Russian mutiny, senseless and merciless." To prevent such a "mutiny," the intelligentsia will have to find a common language with the workers, the likes of whom struck the mines in Siberia. Will the Russian intelligentsia prove capable of accomplishing what Polish intellectuals accomplished in the 1970's? As the world knows, the Polish strikes of 1980 produced Solidarity, not a "senseless and merciless mutiny."[86]

One of the most insightful analyses of the Solidarity phenomenon was provided by Alain Touraine, the French sociologist. Touraine sees the historical meaning of Solidarity, whose rise he believes to signal "the end of communist society," in "setting an alternative agenda of historical action," thereby challenging a major prerogative that the communist regime had reserved for itself.[87] To follow Solidarity in this respect will require that the Russian nationalist intelligentsia put aside its more abstract debates about Orthodox tradition and forget about Zionist plotters. Instead, the intellectuals in Russia (and in other republics) will have to think of ways in which they can help construct a new agenda, an alternative vision of the future. How they perform this task will help determine the shape of any new national identity or identities that are likely to emerge in the USSR. Touraine also offers some instructive thoughts on identity:

To the sociologist, identity is . . . no longer an appeal to a mode of being but the claim to a capacity for action and for change. It is defined in terms of choice and not in terms of substance, essence, or tradition . . . . if identity is opposed to the organization of social life, it will be marginalized or manipulated by those who direct it. On the other hand, the appeal to identity can be considered a labor of democracy, an awareness of the effort by which the actors of a social system, that exerts a great deal of power upon itself and that is engaged in ceaseless change, attempt to determine for themselves the conditions within which their collective and personal life is produced.[88]

As this article has tried to show, any effort in this area will require the Russians to understand that the political entity that many of them now accept as an empire is the same state that they reject as an oppressive bureaucratic machine.

[85]See Geoff Eley's chapter "What Produces Fascism: Preindustrial Traditions or a Crisis of the Capitalist State?" in *From Unification to Nazism: Reinterpreting the German Past*, Boston, London, and Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1986, pp. 254–82; see also Roman Szporluk, *Communism and Nationalism: Karl Marx versus Friedrich List*, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988, pp. 189–90.

[86]According to Bill Keller, writing from Moscow on the strikes in the Ukrainian SSR, "miners who walked out today in the western Ukrainian city of Chervonograd included in their demands the creation of an independent national coal-miners' union explicitly modeled on the Polish union Solidarity." ("Soviet Strikers Hint at Forming a Free Union like Solidarity," *The New York Times*, July 21, 1989.) Future events will show whether these demands will acquire substance and whether the workers of Siberia and Donbas will organize unions modeled on Solidarity.

The original Solidarity in Poland had many dimensions—religious and national as well as social and economic. Just as it is too early to tell whether the workers of Siberia feel any definite regional Siberian or national Russian identity, so it is impossible to detect any specific regional or national Ukrainian identity in the workers' consciousness in the Donbas or Western Ukraine. This brings to mind Ukrainian writer Yuriy Shcherbak's recent remark that unlike elsewhere in the USSR, in Ukraine there have emerged not interethnic conflicts but rather a conflict between Ukrainians and those whom Shcherbak calls "Little Russians." (Interview with Yuriy Shcherbak, interview in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, Jan. 18, 1989, p. 3.) The latter term would describe those ethnic Ukrainians who prefer to consider themselves members of a larger Russian nation while preserving some specific regional Ukrainian features. Thus, the "Little Russians" represent Ukrainian supporters of an "all-Russian" national identity discussed earlier. It would seem, therefore, that in contemporary Ukraine, especially in such heavily Russified areas as Donbas, at least three identities are competing for popular support: Russian, Ukrainian, and "Little Russian." Conceivably, there is a fourth one too—some form of *Soviet* identity. The possibility of such an identity actually taking shape should not be dismissed a priori, even though the concept itself was originally "manufactured upstairs." For ample evidence on how national traditions and national identities were being "invented," that is, consciously produced (not to say manufactured) in 19th-century Europe and elsewhere, see Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, Eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988.

[87]Alain Touraine, *Return of the Actor: Social Theory in Postindustrial Society*, tr. by Myrna Godzich. Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota Press, 1988, p. xix.

[88]Ibid., pp. 81–82.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Belorussian Reawakening

Jan Zaprudnik

Specialists on the Soviet Union have long regarded the Belorussians as a people with a weak national consciousness. The Belorussian nation, together with the Ukrainian people, has also been seen as a target of Russian attempts to co-opt it into a partnership to rule the multinational Soviet empire.[1] An apparent willingness to merge with the Russian nation on the part of the Belorussians and their general political quiescence in the face of regime policies of Russification appeared to testify to a large measure of Russian success in this regard. Consequently, the Belorussian nation has not been a focus of concern for Western scholarship, as compared with, say, the Baltic peoples, or the Ukrainians. Indeed, a major work on Soviet nationalities published in 1986 did not even contain a chapter on Belorussia.[2]

The burgeoning Belorussian national movement of the late 1980's has forced a reevaluation of the conventional wisdom on Belorussia. In conditions of *glasnost'* (openness) and *perestroyka* (restructuring), independent groups of intellectuals and young people have pressed the republican authorities to halt the Russification policies pursued in the republic since the 1930's and to implement policies to promote the Belorussian language and culture. Independent groups have also publicized accounts of the Stalinist terror in the republic, and they have reported on efforts by the Communist Party of Belorussia (CPB) and the republican government to draw a veil over that period of the republic's history. The premise of these activities is that knowledge about Russification and the Great Terror will arouse the moral wrath of the people against the Soviet political system and motivate them to work for fundamental *political* change. Thus, the independent movement has both a cultural and a political dimension.

The republican authorities have grudgingly acceded to some of the demands of the independent groups in the realm of culture and language. But inertia, conservatism, and distrust of the popular movement for change still characterize the party and government apparatuses. In fact, these bureaucracies are obstacles to *perestroyka* as defined by Mikhail Gorbachev. In several instances, Moscow has lent support to the demands of the independent groups, much to the surprise and dismay of republican authorities.

Background

In modern times, Belorussia had an independent existence only from March 1918 to January 1919. A long period of independent existence, however, preceded the modern era. From the ninth to the 14th centuries, the area of what is today Belorussia was ruled by independent princes or by princes closely associated with Kievan Rus'. In the 14th century, as a result of marriages and political agreements, Belorussian territories became part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

After the union between Poland and Lithuania in 1569, Belorussia became part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, but Belorussian princes retained a large measure of control over the affairs of their territories and indeed over the affairs of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

From the era of the Polish partitions in the late 18th century to 1918, Imperial Russia ruled the territory of Belorussia. St. Petersburg pursued the Russification of Belorussian culture, particularly after the failed Polish uprising of 1863–65. In Belorussia, the uprising was led

[1]John A. Armstrong, "The Ethnic Scene in the Soviet Union," in Erich Goldhagen, Ed., *Ethnic Minorities in the Soviet Union*, New York, Praeger, 1968, p. 32.

[2]Robert Conquest, Ed., *The Last Empire. Nationality and the Soviet Future*, Stanford, CA, Hoover Institution Press, 1986.

Jan Zaprudnik is Senior Editor at Radio Liberty's Belorussian Service and Editor of the monthly Bielarus *(New York City). He has taught Russian and Soviet history at Queens College and is the author of many articles on Belorussia.*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by Kastus' Kalinowski, and it had widespread support. It was Kalinowski who denounced Russification in his clandestine newspaper *Muzhytskaya Prawda* and who, in his letter "From Beneath the Gallows," written on the eve of his execution in Vilnius on March 10, 1864, exhorted Belorussians to "fight for your human and national rights, for your faith, for your native country."[3]

The failure of the uprising not only led to increased repression, but in the following decades also stimulated numerous ethnographic and linguistic studies by both Russian and Polish authors—many of whom were Russified or Polonized Belorussians—trying to determine the national identity of the Belorussian people. These studies led the incipient Belorussian national intelligentsia to conclude in the 1880's that "all the particularities of Belorussia give her the right in the future to an autonomous federated independence in the family of Russia's other nationalities."[4] A literary revival ensued as well. It was led by Yanka Kupala (1882–1942), who is considered the Belorussian national poet, the poet Yakub Kolas (1882–1956), and the brothers Ivan and Anton Lutskevich, who published the newspaper *Nasha Niva* (Our Soil). These endeavors gave a powerful boost to the Belorussian national movement in the Revolution of 1905–07 and, eventually, to the culmination of that movement with the proclamation of an independent Belorussia on March 25, 1918.

This attempt at independence failed in the midst of the revolutionary upheaval of the civil war and the war between Soviet Russia and Poland. On January 1, 1919, the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (BSSR) was established with Moscow's reluctant approval, but it did not have effective control over all Belorussian territory.[5] As a result of the peace treaty signed between Poland and Soviet Russia, the Poles succeeded in gaining control over western Belorussia, which remained under Polish administration until September 1939.

Belorussian culture blossomed in the early period of Soviet rule. Belorussian cadres quickly occupied important posts in the party and government bureaucracies. These officials supported historical and ethnographic studies, sponsored literary activities, and funded publishing houses producing works in the Belorussian language. In accordance with the official policy of Belorussianization (*belarusizatsyya*), the Belorussian language came to be used in all spheres of official life, including in the top echelons of government and the party, and throughout higher educational insitutions. The era of Belorussianization is spoken of by today's supporters of *perestroyka* with a certain nostalgia and is presented as a period of "true Leninist nationality policy" that should be thoroughly studied and emulated.

Stalin's Russification policies and mass terror halted the policy of Belorussianization. The Great Terror cost Belorussia more than 2 million victims. The Nazi German occupation of Belorussia from 1941 to 1944 cost an additional 2.2 million lives.

In the postwar reconstruction period, as a result of demographic losses and Stalin's mistrust of all who had lived under German occupation, party and government positions in the BSSR were largely staffed with "outsiders" who were either indifferent or hostile to the Belorussian language and culture. Behind the facade of Belorussian-Russian bilingualism, the center launched a campaign of thorough Russification whose aim was to deprive Belorussians of the ability to speak their own language and the opportunity to cultivate their national traditions. Party and government officials in the republic reliably and thoroughly carried out the Russification policies of the center. Moscow assigned Belorussia the role of "showcase" to demonstrate how Soviet nations were "merging" into "a new historic community." Such policies continued throughout the rule of Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev and indeed into the late 1980's.

The Defense of National Culture

Given the general absence in the post-Stalin period of dissident groups dedicated to resisting the Russification policies of the Soviet regime and to promoting the maintenance and strengthening of Belorussian language and culture, it came as something of a surprise when, on December 15, 1986, 28 eminent Belorussian scholars, writers, and artists—some of whom were members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU)—signed a petition to General Secretary Gorbachev expressing their nation's fundamental grievances against the suppression of the Belorussian language. "From the middle of the 1950's, in the period of 'voluntarism'," they wrote, "Belorussian schools were closed on a grand scale, a number of Belorussian periodical publications changed over to Russian, our language was squeezed out of almost all spheres of life." The petition cited the following statistics: "The proportion of *belle-lettres* published in the republic in Russian (calculated in terms of printed pages) rose from 89.9

[3]*The Uprising in Byelorussia: "Peasants' Truth" and "Letters from Beneath the Gallows"*, with texts and commentaries by Jan Zaprudnik and Thomas Bird, New York, The Kreceuski Foundation, 1980, p. 68.

[4]Jan Zaprudnik, "The National Consciousness of the Byelorussians and the Road to Nationhood," in Vitaut and Zora Kipel, Eds., *Byelorussian Statehood. Reader and Bibliography*, New York, Byelorussian Institute of Arts and Sciences, 1988, p. 12.

[5]This period is well-documented in Vitaut and Zora Kipel, Eds., op cit.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

percent in 1981 to 95.3 percent in 1984. Virtually no films are produced in Belorussian. There are about 15 theaters in the republic; only three are Belorussian. Belorussian is almost never used as a working language in official correspondence in the party, or in local and national government."[6] Observing that "language is the soul of the nation," the authors of the petition pleaded with Gorbachev "to save the Belorussian people from spiritual extinction." They also reminded him that as a reaction to the discrimination against Belorussian culture, "we can now observe a noticeable growth of national awareness," which, in turn, "is provoking a hostile reaction from the bureaucracy." "The Belorussian language," observed the letter signatories, "is one of the foundations upon which the statehood of the Belorussian people rests. For that reason it must be protected by legislation." The authors of the letter suggested that the following legal measures be implemented to stem the decline of Belorussian language and culture:

- The introduction of Belorussian as a working language in party, state, and local government bodies in the republic, particularly in the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education, the Ministries of Culture and Communication, the State Committee on Publishing, the Academy of Sciences, and in the book trade, cinema, television, and radio.
- A compulsory examination in Belorussian language and literature (essay) for graduation from secondary schools, and in the Belorussian language (dictation) for graduation from eight-year incomplete secondary schools, irrespective of the language of instruction in these schools.
- The introduction of a compulsory examination in Belorussian language and literature (essay) for entry into all institutes of higher education (students coming from outside the republic and from foreign countries would be exempt), and in the Belorussian language (dictation) for entry into the technical colleges of the republic.

The four-page letter was followed by a seven-page Appendix detailing "Proposals for a Radical Improvement in the Position of the Belorussian Language, Culture, and Patriotic Education in the BSSR." The appendix contained specific suggestions for policy changes in the areas of ideological upbringing, science, education, book publishing, culture, art, and the mass media.

The concerns of the Belorussian intelligentsia received some minimal recognition in Moscow as the Central Committee of the CPSU formed a commission to investigate regime policies regarding Belorussian language and culture.[7] However, the letter of the 28 evoked an indirect rebuttal from Yafrem Sakalow (Sokolov) who in January 1987 had become first secretary of the Communist Party of Belorussia (CPB). (Sakalow replaced Nikolay Slyun'kov, who became a secretary of the CPSU Central Committee on January 28, 1987.) At a plenary session of the CPB's Central Committee on March 25, 1987, Sakalow, without mentioning the letter of the 28, flatly denied claims that "spiritual extinction" threatened the Belorussian nation. He argued that "all the necessary conditions have been created in Belorussia to permit the national culture to flourish."[8]

Thus the stage was set for a prolonged confrontation between members of the nationally conscious intelligentsia, augmented by young people organized in the so-called "informal societies," and the party and government bureaucracy in the BSSR. Over the last year and a half, the dynamics of this relationship have been slowly changing in favor of the defenders of the values of the national culture. The organized opposition has used opportunities afforded by Gorbachev's reform efforts to publicize its concerns. *Glasnost'* has produced its most tangible results in the BSSR in the revival of concern for Belorussian language and culture.

After six months of vain waiting for an answer from Moscow to the letter of 28, on June 4, 1987, Belorussian activists wrote another letter to Gorbachev (with copies sent to *Pravda* and to the Supreme Soviet of the BSSR), signed this time by 134 people, including workers. Using sharper language, the letter rejected as dubious Sakalow's claim about the "flourishing" of Belorussian national culture. It also reminded Gorbachev that Belorussia is "a sovereign state, one of the founders of the United Nations Organization" and that "83.5 percent of the indigenous population consider Belorussian their native language."[9] The efforts of the Central Committee of the CPSU to look into the Belorussian republic's cultural policies did not generate great hopes among the writers of this letter. "Individual measures currently being undertaken or planned, " complained the letter of the 134, "are superficial and cosmetic in character:

[6] *Letters to Gorbachev. New Documents from Soviet Byelorussia*, 2nd Ed., London, The Association of Byelorussians in Great Britain, 1987, pp. 20–21.

[7] The commission was mentioned in a letter to Gorbachev signed by 134 Belorussian intellectuals on June 4, 1987 (to be discussed later). According to this letter, the conclusions of the Central Committee commission were not made public. See *Letters to Gorbachev. New Documents from Soviet Byelorussia*, Issue 2, London, The Association of Byelorussians in Great Britain, 1987, p. 19.

[8] Ibid., p. 24.

[9] Ibid., p. 13.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they do not touch on issues of principle."[10]

The organized concern for the preservation of Belorussian language and culture also expanded to include other influential groups. Thus, not coincidentally, on the day the letter of the 134 was signed, a plenary session of the Belorussian Writers' Union adopted a 12-point resolution expressing largely the same demands as the letter of the 28.[11]

Genocide and Russification

The view generally held by the Belorussian intelligentsia, and now openly expressed in official publications, is that the suppression of the national language was but one aspect of the forced merging of Soviet nations begun by Stalin and continued by Khrushchev and Brezhnev. This policy had two aspects: physical (genocide) and cultural (ethnocide). Throughout most of the postwar period, defenders of national survival had difficulty resisting the cultural aspect of merging (Russification) because the physical aspect of this process could not be fully revealed and denounced. Such revelations became possible only under Gorbachev. The unearthing of mass graves at Kurapaty (see below) and detailed descriptions of Stalinist prisons and labor camps provided a solid basis for condemning both genocide and ethnocide. Establishing a connection between the destruction of the Belorussian nation and Russification policies was seen as essential in order to remedy the situation about which the letters of the 28 and the 134 had complained. Nationally conscious intellectuals and Belorussian youth now see their efforts to revive and defend the national culture as a vindication of the lives of those who perished under Stalin, as well as a personal moral obligation. Moreover, nationally conscious intellectuals argue that if Gorbachev's reformist regime condemns certain of Stalin's policies in the political and economic spheres, the condemnation ought to be extended to the consequences of Stalinist policies in the realm of nationality policy.

The beginning of a large movement to recapture the Belorussian national heritage can be dated to November 1, 1987, when an unauthorized rally took place in Minsk to observe the traditional day of *Dzyady* (All Saints' Day). About 300 demonstrators, mostly young people, came to Kupala Park where stands a monument honoring Yanka Kupala. The rally began with a recitation of Kupala's poem, "To the Fallen," the first lines of which read:

> *Sleep ye all who had searched for the truth in the world*
> *And not having found it, descended into the grave before your time. . . .*

The poem ends with the solemn pledge:

> *Awakened by you, we have risen and will never fall asleep again.*[12]

The speeches that followed the recitation of the poem explicitly termed Stalinist policy in Belorussia as genocidal. Anatoliy Maysenya, a correspondent from *Sovetskaya Belorussiya,* the only newspaper that reported on the event—after a two-and-one-half-week delay—was left aghast by this accusation which, until that moment, had been reserved for the policies of Adolf Hitler.[13]

Since the rally in Kupala Park, nationally conscious Belorussian intellectuals have maintained with increasing vehemence that Stalin's policies were indeed genocidal, and they have gathered their own statistics to buttress their claims. For example, Barys Sachanka, a writer studying the terror of the 1930's, argued that "speaking of Belorussia, the number of victims, according to my calculations and those of others, equals the losses in the Great Patriotic War."[14] As to the latter, the *Belorussian Soviet Encyclopedia* states that "during the years of their occupation, the Fascists destroyed in Belorussia more than 2,200,000 Soviet citizens and prisoners of war."[15] If Stalin was responsible for an equal number of losses, the total number of people destroyed by the Nazis and the Soviets represented a catastrophic loss for a nation of 10 million.

Belorussian intellectuals believe that Stalin's policies were even more devastating than Hitler's for they targeted the intelligentsia and the enterprising peasantry, the intellect and heart of the Belorussian nation. Sachanka's statistics suggest the extent of Stalin's desire to destroy Belorussian arts and letters. He found that "128 Belorussian writers fell victim to repression in 1937, and only 39 members of the Writers' Union remained free. And if one speaks of those who wrote in Belorussian, only 14 of them survived, and they too

[10]Ibid., p. 19.
[11]*Litaratura i Mastatstva* (Minsk—hereafter, *LiM*), July 10, 1987.
[12]Janka Kupala, *The Heritage. Selected Poetry of Janka Kupala,* New York-Munich, Baćkaŭśćyna, 1955, p. 160.
[13]*Sovetskaya Belorussiya* (Minsk), Nov. 17, 1987.
[14]*Zvyazda* (Minsk), Mar. 3, 1989.
[15]*Belaruskaya Savetskaya Entsyklapedyya* (Belorussian Soviet Encyclopedia), Minsk, Academy of Sciences of the BSSR, Vol. 1, 1969, p. 217.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

were on the list of suspects."[16] One of the survivors of the terror of the 1930's, Paval Prudnikaw, claiming that the victims of Stalinism among writers were actually three times as numerous as the number of writers who perished in the war against Hitler, argued for a commemorative plaque to the memory of the former in the House of the Writer, where those who perished in the "Great Patriotic War" are already remembered.[17] Prudnikaw's suggestion apparently was not implemented.

The Informal Youth Movement

The national revival among the Belorussian intelligentsia was actually preceded by the emergence in the early 1980's of an informal youth movement in the republic. This grass-roots movement formed around the idea of an independent Belorussian culture, in reaction against a staid official culture that smothered youthful aspirations and national consciousness.

Vintsuk Vyachorka, a lecturer at the Minsk Pedagogical Institute, recalls the genesis of the independent youth movement:

The informal patriotic movement began in the winter of 1980–81. Specifically, it started from a Christmas custom. On the eve of the holiday, students—about five of them from the Belorussian State University, future philologists, about 10 from the Institute of Theater and the Arts, and some other professions and schools—got together and decided to revive Christmas in the streets of Minsk. Some had had friendly ties earlier, some became acquainted on the spot. Caroling passed interestingly, but not without 'incidents'. Somebody called the police. But since we had not done anything illegal, we were released. Judging from how warmly we were received by the majority of households, we became convinced that this was a worthy cause. And so, spontaneously, our first society, "The Belorussian Shop," was established.[18]

The first real clash with the authorities took place on April 20, 1986, when "The Belorussian Shop," obviously encouraged by the spirit of Gorbachev's program for *perestroyka*, decided to organize a folkloric Festival of Spring. A group of young people from the Boarding School of Music and the Arts, dressed in national costumes, marched in a procession to the site of the festivities. They were confronted by a group of *afgantsy* (men who had served in Afghanistan), who had been organized the previous day by the city Komsomol (Communist Youth League) committee. These hooligans beat and dispersed the young people. The celebration was apparently held at a later date, but without advertisement and with no national costumes.

Despite official attempts to stem the phenomenon, informal groups of young people have spread throughout the republic. "An immense mass of young people between 14 and 25 years of age," wrote Anatoli Maysenya, "belong to unofficial societies established spontaneously on initiative 'from below' and in circumvention of wishes 'from above'."[19] According to an internal memo of the Minsk City Party Committee (*gorkom*) dated November 1988, Minsk alone had 566 "amateur self-managing associations and clubs," with more than 46,000 members in all. The memo, entitled "Some Current Questions of Ideological Work Under Contemporary Conditions," alerted party secretaries to the "rapid growth, both vertically and horizontally, of a network of so-called 'informal associations'." The membership of these groups had increased from three to five times since Agust 1987. The network of these so-called 'informals' is "multi-stage, complex, and well-adapted to rapidly-changing circumstances." The memo warned not to underestimate these groups: "It is impermissible . . . to count on their small membership. An example: KSS-KOR (Solidarity's "brain-trust") in Poland in 1977–79 did not exceed 30 people."[20]

Most Belorussian informal groups have an apolitical orientation. Of the 566 mentioned in the *gorkom* memo, nine were reportedly devoted to technical production, 24 to natural sciences, 157 to artistic endeavors, 102 to physical health, and 51 to "practical morality." In addition, 12 were formed by collectors of various kinds, and 20 were so-called "sobriety clubs." The report labelled 104 of these groups "multi-purposed." A preliminary survey of young people conducted by the City Council of Minsk and the Belorussian State University indicated that 65 percent of the students polled were involved in varying degrees with the informal groups.[21]

A report in the Belorussian Komsomol newspaper also seemed to acknowledge that most of these groups lacked any particular political significance. "Informals in most cases," it explained, "are active and conscientious Komsomol members who are sincerely striving

[16] *Zvyazda*, Mar. 3, 1989.
[17] *LiM*, Dec. 25, 1987.
[18] *Nioman* (Minsk), No. 6, 1988, p. 160.
[19] *Sovetskaya Belorussiya*, Oct. 1, 1987.
[20] "Some Current Questions of Ideological Work Under Contemporary Conditions," *Belorusskaya Tribuna* (Minsk), Samizdat, No. 3, Dec. 18, 1988. KSS-KOR is the Polish acronym for the Committee for Social Self Defense/Committee for Workers' Defense.
[21] Ibid.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to solve the problems of our society but, having become disillusioned with the possibilities of their own huge organization, establish themselves in groups of immediate concern and act autonomously."[22]

The memo of the Minsk party organization maintained that "*the main problem*" (emphasis in the original) lay with the 97 groups having a "socio-political direction." These groups espoused, among other views, the idea of a Belorussian "Renewal" (*Adradzhen'ne*). Inevitably, the scope of their activity grew, and in fact, the *gorkom* memo noted a marked tendency toward their politicization. It listed the most important informal socio-political groups:

- The *Talaka* club with 58 active members and a fluctuating membership of up to 100. Meetings are attended by 300 to 500 young people. Its emphasis has been Belorussia's socio-political and national uniqueness.
- *Spadchyna* (Heritage) club is based at the Boarding School of Music and the Arts and has nine active members. Its concerns are artistic problems of national culture and history.
- The *Krynichka* (Springwell) club of the "Integral" Production Society has 11 active members. This club is interested in the subject of national uniqueness.
- The *Tuteyshyya* (Local Inhabitants) Society at the Writers' Union of the BSSR has 40 members. Its concerns are socio-political and literary. It is characterized by a high degree of politicization and "negativism" (that is, a critical attitude toward the authorities), according to the party memo.
- The *Shtuka* (Art) Association at the Institute of Theater and the Arts has 10 active members. Its main concern is the struggle for national uniqueness.
- The *S'vitanak* (Dawn) Association is active at the Technological Institute and has a core of 19 members and a total membership fluctuating up to 40. Its concerns include ecological problems and the struggle for national uniqueness.
- *Suchasnik* (Contemporary) Club has a core membership of 12. Its concerns are socio-political.
- The *Minskaya Alternativa* (Minsk Alternative) Society's concerns are socio-political. It is characterized by an extremely high level of politicization and "negativism," according to the party memo.

The memo also mentions the existence of small groups of supporters of the so-called "struggle-for-national-uniqueness" platform at Pedagogical School No. 2, the P. Hlebka Art School, the urban tourist club, and at high school Nos. 20 and 180, all located in Minsk.[23] Although not as numerous, similar groups are known to be active in Gomel, Grodno, Vitebsk, Brest, and Lida.

Consolidation of the Informal Groups

The tendency among the informal groups "to unite and consolidate with those who share their views" (in the words of the party memo) materialized in December 1987, one year after the letter of the 28 was sent to Gorbachev. By that time it had become clear that the cause of de-Russifying Belorussia would require much more than letter-writing. The stubborn refusal of the republic's bureaucracy to accommodate demands to return the national language to the classroom and to use Belorussian on street signs, in publications, and in public and governmental offices convinced the informal societies of the need for a concerted, collective effort to press for fundamental change.

On December 26, 1987, more than 30 independent groups sent delegates to Palachanka near Minsk for their first *Val'ny Soym* (General Diet—the name of the parliament of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania-Rus').[24] The young activists show a pronounced predilection for terms from the distant past and for unique-sounding, purely Belorussian words to establish the movement's roots in national tradition. Indeed, with the current interest in knowledge about the past, the fact that the Belorussian people shared much of their history with Lithuanians, Ukrainians, and Poles contributes in an important way to better understanding and closer cooperation between these neighboring peoples. Vasil' Bykaw (Bykov), Belorussia's most prominent writer and a strong influence within the independent movement has argued that:

Poles and Lithuanians are our historical brothers, and we have countless examples of our common, truly fraternal life within the same ecology, the same culture, and even the same state. If this was possible at the dawn of our history, why should it be impossible now?[25]

Thus, in line with efforts to reach out to other national groups, representatives from Lviv, Kaunas, Vilnius, Leningrad, and Moscow were invited to the two-day gathering at Palachanka.

Official press coverage of the "General Diet" was

[22] *Chyrvonaya Zmena* (Minsk), Jan. 11, 1989.

[23] "Some Current Questions of Ideological Work Under Contemporary Conditions," loc. cit.

[24] *Nioman*, No. 6, 1988, p. 159.

[25] *LiM*, July 7, 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

very skimpy and biased; hence information about what took place has to be extracted from press attacks and *samizdat* publications. According to an official source, however, it is known that M. V. Padhayny, a Belorussian Komsomol Central Committee secretary, delivered a speech at the Palachanka proceedings. He tried to influence the convention but to little effect. In a classic understatement, the commentator Maysenya noted that the republic's authorities exhibit "severe limitations of knowledge of psychology concerning age and social groups and arbitrary judgments about the initiatives of young people."[26]

In July 1988, some of the results of the Palachanka deliberations appeared in *samizdat* form as "An Appeal of the Initiating Group of the Confederation of Belorussian Associations to Belorussian Youth." Inspired by mass movements for reform in the Baltic republics, the Initiating Group tried to arouse similar enthusiasm in Belorussia:

The cause of self-determination of the Belorussian youth movement has ripened not only because of internal reasons. We are watched with hope and concern by the peoples of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. They are waiting for us to join the formidable wave of national upsurge that is rolling over the Baltic region. In Belorussia's joining this surge, there is the assurance of irreversibility of revolutionary changes in the Baltic republics as well as throughout the entire Soviet Union, which means that it is our internationalist duty to do so.[27]

The authors of the Appeal reported that despite determined resistance from the regime, "rallies of thousands of people in Liberty Square in Minsk, in the Kurapaty forest near Minsk, in Novapolatsak, and Harodnya (Grodno)" show that "the future belongs precisely to the BELORUSSIAN REVIVAL." The Appeal declared with confidence that "in our Republic there is the movement for democratization and restructuring. This force is the Belorussian youth association." The Appeal set forth as the ultimate goal of these groups the formation of an organization uniting "all politically and nationally conscious youth," including "all Belorussian associations and societies that exist beyond the borders of the republic," who stand up "in support of the radical restructuring of Belorussia."

Bureaucracy and National Uniqueness

In the climate of *glasnost'*, the burgeoning independent youth movement was accompanied by the appearance of widespread protests by Belorussian intellectuals in some official publications against suppression of Belorussian culture by republican bureaucrats. Some of the criticism that was too strong for Minsk censors appeared in more liberal Russian-language newspapers and periodicals of the Baltic republics and in some central publications in Moscow.

Among the Belorussian newspapers, the weekly *Litaratura i Mastatstva* (Literature and Art) has become the most outspoken. In February 1988, this newspaper carried a lengthy poem entitled "Farewell" by People's Poet Pimen Panchanka, one of the signatories of the letter of 28. Bidding farewell to his native tongue, Panchanka, a party member, accused "powerful bureaucrats" in the CPB and in the Belorussian government of maintaining that "if you speak Russian, you are an internationalist, but of you speak Belorussian, you are a nationalist."[28]

Furthermore, an article by historian and archeologist Zyanon Paznyak, "Bilingualism and Bureaucracy," appeared in Estonia's Russian-language monthly *Raduga* (which also appears in Estonian as *Vikerkaar*). Using Belorussia as an example, Paznyak shows the parasitic nature of the bureaucracy in relation to national culture. "Bilingualism, according to the calculations of the bureaucracy," he writes, "is a method of pressure on national culture, a way to subvert it as a consolidating source, to 'disarm' it in order to achieve assimilation in the interests of a single bureaucratic state."[29] Paznyak thus exposes bureaucrats as the worst enemy of national languages in the Soviet Union:

Wherever the positions of the national language have been weakened to the extent that its usage creates obstacles for advancement in society and in the administrative system, the bureaucratic functionary abandons it and becomes a parasite on the Russian language. Here he commits the most sinister of his acts—he becomes the gravedigger of his native national language, the orchestrator of bureaucratic great-power chauvinism and Russification. At this stage there appears a repulsive reactionary phenomenon: national nihilism—the renunciation of national traditions and denigration of the cultural values of one's own people, and in the first place, of their way of life, history, and language.[30]

[26] *Sovetskaya Belorussiya*, Oct. 2, 1987.
[27] The document is in the Archive of the newspaper *Bielarus* in New York.
[28] *LiM*, Feb. 26, 1988.
[29] Zyanon Paznyak, "Bilingualism and Bureaucratism," *Raduga* (Tallinn), April 1988, p. 37.
[30] Ibid., p. 45.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Paznyak supports his indictment by pointing out that by the mid-1970's, in Belorussia's 95 cities and in "almost all" of the republic's 117 towns, not a single school or kindergarten remained with Belorussian as the language of instruction.[31]

At the end of his 15-page article, Paznyak denounces the BSSR's leadership for "political falsehood." However, he makes a "generally optimistic forecast" for a revival of Belorussian because "it is not that simple to destroy a language that has behind it an ancient culture and history."[32]

Kurapaty and Its Consequences

On June 3, 1988, a veritable bombshell exploded on the pages of *Litaratura i Mastatstva.* After delays and stormy confrontations with his superiors in the Central Committee of the CPB, *LiM*'s editor, Anatol' Vyartsinski, with the unanimous support of the editorial board, prevailed in publishing a well-documented account of more than 500 mass graves in the Kurapaty forest near Minsk, where in 1937–41, Stalin's henchmen executed tens of thousands of people. The article provided a detailed account by archeologist Zyanon Paznyak and engineer Awhen Shmyhalow of the unearthing of several dozen of the 500 graves, which are estimated to contain up to 300,000 bodies. The estimate of the number of victims had to be deleted, however, as a condition of the article's publication.

The story of Kurapaty, which reverberated throughout the world, quickly penetrated into the national consciousness and is finding its way into art. Various poets have incorporated the theme of Kurapaty into their verse. Inevitably, prose writers will follow. However, painters and cinematographers are cautiously awaiting a more favorable political climate. Kurapaty is becoming a generic symbol for Stalinist genocide, just as the destruction of the surroundings of Khatyn' by the Nazi occupiers symbolizes the brutalities of Hitlerism.

Kurapaty mobilized Belorussian public opinion in a powerful manner. On June 19, 1988, a demonstration numbering about 10,000 people marched to the site of the killings to commemorate the dead and to demand the creation of an independent civil commission to investigate the crime.[33] An official commission to investigate the Kurapaty murders had already been created in June 1988, but soon it became obvious to those familiar with the commission's work that its purpose was to cover up the murders rather than to establish the facts of the case.[34] Dissatisfaction with the work of the official commission prompted the formation of a working group called Committee–"58" (referring to Article 58 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Republic under which the repressions of the 1930's were conducted) to look into the crime. In turn, Committee–"58" evolved into "The Martyrology of Belorussia," with a program similar to Moscow's "Memorial" group.[35]

About 400 people attended the constituent meeting of Martyrology in Minsk's House of Cinema on October 19, 1988. At the meeting, Vasil' Bykaw laid out the purpose of the group:

We ought to compile a grand Martyrology of our losses and our martyrs. This would be laid as a cornerstone in the foundation of our national consciousness, would become an important element of our historical memory and a guarantee of the future of our people, who have been struggling with the determination of a condemned man through genocide, blood, and insults toward light, goodness, and justice.[36]

Paznyak was elected chairman of Martyrology's five-member Civic Council. The meeting adopted a resolution and charter for the organization, whose full name is "The Belorussian Civic Historical-Educational Society for Remembering the Victims of Stalinism, 'The Martyrology of Belorussia'." Its constituent bodies included the Union of Cinematographers of the BSSR, the editorial board of *Litaratura i Mastatstva,* the Writers' Union of the BSSR, and the Union of Artists of the BSSR. The Charter defined the organization's basic goals as follows:

- Fully revealing the mass killings, repressions, and terror in Belorussia under Stalin; undertaking studies of their causes and consequences.
- Ascertaining the numbers and names of people who perished during the repression and terror from the end of the 1920's to the beginning of the 1950's in Belorussia. In addition, determining the names of Belorus-

[31]Ibid., p. 48.

[32]Ibid., p. 50. Many similar, although less vehement, accusations have appeared in articles and letters to the editor in *Litaratura i Mastatstva, Chyrvonaya Zmena, Zvyazda,* and two monthlies for youth, *Maladosts'* and *Krynitsa.*

[33]*LiM,* June 24, 1988.

[34]News about the commission first appeared in the January 22, 1989, issue of *Sovetskaya Belorussiya,* more than six months after the commission was formed.

[35]"Memorial" is an organization made up of some of the most prominent members of the Soviet intelligentsia. Its purpose is to win regime agreement to erect a monument to the victims of Stalinism, to collect documents and testimony about the Stalinist terror, and to sponsor historical research and writing about Stalinism.

[36]Press-hrupa "Navina pavedamlaye," (Press-Group "News Release"), Minsk, Samizdat press release, n.d., pp. 2–3.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sians who perished in territories outside the republic's borders, including in places of exile and detention.

- Compiling a martyrology of Belorussia's people who perished in the Stalinist genocide.
- Perpetuating the memory of all innocent victims of Stalinism in Belorussia.[37]

Martyrology's charter also spells out its political aims. The organization seeks to use revelations about the past to enlighten the Belorussian people about the nature of the present Soviet system:

Martyrology promotes the development of political, legal, and cultural-national consciousness of our citizens and youth in the spirit of rejection and condemnation of the political system of Stalinist excesses, of compulsory, violent, and undemocratic methods of solving social, political, and economic problems.[38]

The charter makes clear Martyrology's belief that the dissemination of knowledge about the true nature of the system is the most effective means to inspire people to work for political change.

At the same meeting at the Minsk House of Cinema, the Belorussian Popular Front for Restructuring, "Renewal," (hereafter—BPF) was founded. BPF's organizational committee of 32 prominent writers, artists, scholars, and others—many of them party members—described itself as "a supporter of restructuring (*perabudova*) based on the principles of democracy and humanism that was begun by the better elements of the CPSU." In its appeal to the public, the BPF declared itself opposed to "the monopoly of power by bureaucrats in any sphere of life" and in favor of "the real sovereignty of Belorussia proclaimed by the constitutions of the BSSR and USSR." In addition to seeking establishment of the rule of law and the inviolability of human rights, the BPF also demanded "the rebirth of and official status for the Belorussian language."[39]

Establishing the legitimacy of nationhood. Martyrology and the BPF sought to use the discovery of the mass graves at Kurapaty and the reluctance of the authorities to allow proper commemoration of the victims of Stalinism to generate a renewed concern for political morality and to reawaken Belorussian national consciousness. "A renewal of memory and justice regarding the victims of Stalinism," a resolution of Martyrology's constituent meeting reads, "is our political and moral duty." Martyrology's charter avers that an account of the victims of Stalinism "could grow into a Martyrology of all of Belorussian history."[40] Thus, for Martyrology, historical knowledge is essential because the entire process of renewal and restructuring is predicated on a rebirth of national consciousness, whose source is knowledge of past regime excesses. Thus, the linkage of memory, morality, and politics was to serve as the basis for fundamental change.

The draft program of the BPF outlined the historical roots of Belorussian nationhood:

The Belorussian people gained the right to sovereign nationhood by struggle and suffering throughout their entire history. The traditions of nationhood in the principalities of Polatsk and Turaw; the sovereignty of Belorussia and Lithuania embodied by the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Rus', and Samogitia; the traditions of struggle for fitting existence of man and nation—the uprisings of [Tadeusz] Kościuszko and [Kastus'] Kalinowski, the revolutions of 1905–07 and 1917—all this led logically to the proclamation of the independent Belorussian Democratic Republic on March 25, 1918, and then to the creation of the sovereign Soviet Socialist Republic of Belorussia on January 1, 1919.[41]

As this long citation shows, the BPF uses Belorussian historical traditions to justify aspects of its political activities and program. The principalities of Polatsk and Turaw are models for the present day because they successfully struggled for their independence against Kievian Rus'. Belorussian sovereignty within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Rus', and Samogitia also has a political resonance for Belorussians today because between the 14th and the 17th centuries the Belorussian language had an official status and was used in the state chancery, magistracies, courts, and diplomacy, as well as in private correspondence and *belles lettres*.[42] These historical facts thus legitimate calls for the Belorussianization of the republic. The uprisings of Kościuszko and Kalinowski, which were fought to defend and to broaden freedoms once held in the Grand Duchy and later in the Polish Commonwealth, are now held up as examples of valiant actions that ought to inspire present generations to similar sacrifices.

More generally, the independent groups use national traditions to forge a new national unity in opposition to

[37]*Martyraloh* (Minsk), Samizdat, No. 1, 1989, p. 13.
[38]Ibid., p. 14.
[39]For the full text of the BPF's appeal, see *Bielarus*, No. 353, November 1988, p. 2.
[40]*Martyraloh*, Samizdat, No. 1, 1989, p. 11.
[41]*Naviny* (Minsk), Samizdat, No. 3, 1989, p. 3.
[42]*Belaruskaya Savetskaya Entsyklapedyya*, Vol. 2, 1970, p. 226.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the class emphasis of Marxist-Leninist ideology. As Zyanon Paznyak has stated, "there does not exist in society a stronger consolidating element than national consciousness."[43] Moreover, the leadership of the BPF has also witnessed the successful efforts of the Baltic independent groups to use their peoples' national traditions to justify programs calling for republican autonomy and even independence. As noted earlier, shared historical traditions with Lithuanians, Ukrainians, and Poles also facilitate the creation of common political programs uniting these peoples against Moscow.

Opportunities for publicity. Although, as noted, *glasnost'* has allowed *Litaratura i Mastatstva, Chyrvonaya Zmena, Krynitsa,* and some other official Belorussian- and Russian-language publications to provide a forum for the informal groups and their sympathizers, the impact of these publications is limited because of their considerably smaller circulation as compared with the remainder of the republic's Russian-language newspapers and periodicals. In addition, official reporting on the activities of the informal groups in both Belorussian-language and non–Belorussian-language publications excludes their formal statements and documents. From the onset of the nationalist pressure for cultural and political change, the party has sought to minimize advertisement of the opposition's demands. As of the summer of 1989, not a single document from the informal societies (declaration, appeal, statute, or the like) has appeared in the official press. Even the writers' weekly, *Litaratura i Mastatstva,* the most outspoken organ of the Belorussian intelligentsia, was barred for more than a year from publishing the program of the Language Commission of the Belorussian Cultural Fund, which is part of the all-Union Cultural Fund. The language program was worked out in the spring of 1988. It had first to appear in London before *Litaratura i Mastatstva* found it possible to print it.[44]

In some instances, Moscow-based central publications such as *Ogonek, Pravda, Izvestiya, Vechernyaya Moskva,* and *Moscow News* provide an outlet for complaints and articles that otherwise would have been stifled in Minsk by over-cautious or over-zealous bureaucrats. In addition, many all-Union newspapers and periodicals have their own correspondents in the BSSR. As a rule, they are more inquisitive reporters and more forthright in their criticisms of shortcomings than correspondents from republican newspapers. The relative openness of the central newspapers only bolsters Gorbachev's prestige in the eyes of Belorussian supporters of *perestroyka* and, one can surmise, aggravates the conservatives in the party and government bureaucracies.

Deprived of access to the republic's official press, each informal group has to rely on its own resources for publicity. Thus, *samizdat* publications, bulletins, and magazines began to appear. By early 1989, a dozen such unofficial publications had a circulation of between 5,000 and 10,000 each.[45] All of them, with the exception of *Belorusskaya Tribuna*, use the Belorussian language.

Informal groups' publication activities have been modest because they lack money and technical facilities and must distribute their publications clandestinely. Since its inception in October 1988, the BPF, which is the most active of the informal groups, has spent 43,740 rubles for publishing seven issues of *Naviny* (News) and three issues of *Ekspress-Khronika,* both of which have a total circulation of 200,000 copies.[46] According to a BPF insider from Minsk, 90 percent of the paper for those bulletins was obtained from Lithuania—another example of cooperation between Vilnius and Minsk. These publications are disseminated mainly in Minsk, Grodno, and Vitebsk, and in other large cities where BPF support groups exist. However, these publications remain unavailable in some oblast centers because of the vigilant surveillance of the authorities.

Under Official Attack

The party mobilized its propaganda apparatus for a counterattack against the incipient Belorussian national movement. On October 19, 1988, the day of the constituent meeting of Martyrology and the BPF, the daily *Sovetskaya Belorussiya* carried a full-page "round table" by party historians and archivists on the subject of the German occupation of 1941–44. These "scholars" devoted much attention to the use by Belorussian "collaborators" of the national emblem *Pahonya* (Pursuit), which had become very popular with the independent

[43] *LiM,* July 7, 1989.
[44] *LiM,* May 26, 1989.
[45] *Naviny* (News), bulletin of the Belorussian Popular Front; *Supolnasts'* (Community), Minsk, bulletin of the Coordinating Council of the Confederation of Belorussian Societies; *Studentskaya Dumka* (Student Thought), Minsk, magazine of the ecological group, *S'vitanak* (Dawn); *Pravaslawnaya Dumka* (Orthodox Thought), Minsk, magazine of the Christian Orthodox youth; *Kantrol'* (Control), Minsk, bulletin of the Literary Society of Young Authors; *Martyraloh* (Martyrology), publication of the Belorussian Civic Historical-Educational Society for Remembering the Victims of Stalinism; *Belorusskaya Tribuna,* bulletin of the Independent Information Center of a BPF support group; *Reanimova* (Reanimated Language), Grodno, magazine of a cultural club, and *Vera* (Faith), Minsk-Smolensk, a Belorussian Catholic magazine.
[46] *Bielarus,* No. 360, July 1989, p. 2.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

groups. One of the article's illustrations was a photo of a purported certificate of the Belorussian Mutual Relief showing its logo *Pahonya* coupled with a swastika. The émigré newspaper *Bielarus* exposed the photograph as a forgery.[47]

Another salvo came from *Vecherniy Minsk* on October 21, 1988, in an article entitled "The Evolution of Political Ignorance" signed by five prominent conservatives and reprinted the following day by all the republic's central and many regional newspapers, with the exception of *Litaratura i Mastatstva.* The article of the five accused the Talaka society of following in the footsteps of World War II Nazi "collaborators" and "inviting our entire youth into the same ideological and spiritual whirlpool."

On October 22, 1988, party organizations brought some 900 "supporters" to the House of Political Education in Minsk to adopt a resolution requesting that the authorities prohibit "Martyrology." In subsequent days the official press unleashed a string of nasty attacks against the activities of the BPF, Martyrology, other informal groups, and the intelligentsia in general, very much in the spirit of the neo-Stalinist manifesto of Nina Andreyeva in the March 13, 1988, issue of *Sovetskaya Rossiya.*[48]

At the same time, Belorussian media reports about events in the Baltic region were full of distortions, imputing violence and criminality to independent groups in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, and attributing similar intentions to the Belorussian national movement. Although this vitriolic press barrage seriously hindered efforts of the BPF to gain support, in December 1988, the front reported that it had the allegiance of 370 supporting groups totaling 8,000 to 10,000 members.[49] Significantly, about 40 percent of the supporting groups were reported to be from industrial enterprises, and thus the support came from workers as well as from intellectuals.[50]

These official attacks preceded tougher measures to reduce the influence of the informal groups. A violent confrontation erupted on October 30, 1988, when some informal organizations attempted again to commemorate *Dzyady*. On October 12, 1988, several self-managing societies of the young—the literary club *Tuteyshyya,* the historical club *Talaka,* the musical club *Nyamiha,* and others—had met to discuss this second annual celebration of *Dzyady*. Commemoration of the dead had taken on an especially somber cast after the revelations about the Kurapaty graves four months earlier. Also on the agenda was the second General Diet, which was to establish the Confederation of Belorussian Youth Societies. Further impetus to these plans was added a week later with the formation of the Martyrology of Belorussia and the Belorussian Popular Front.

In the midst of the press campaign against the latter, the informal youth groups mentioned above filed a formal request with Minsk city authorities for permission to hold a requiem service/meeting on October 30. After initially agreeing, the authorities withdrew their permission. Nevertheless, about 10,000 people flocked to a cemetery on the outskirts of Minsk only to find that water cannons and police with dogs and tear gas were waiting for them. Clashes ensued, and the police arrested 80 demonstrators. Part of the dispersed crowd marched to Kurapaty, where speeches were made and prayers offered.

The police action provoked a storm of angry condemnation in the Minsk and Moscow newspapers and was widely reported by the world press. Soviet human rights activist, Academician Andrey Sakharov, who at the time was visiting the United States, mentioned the violent breakup of the Minsk rally as one of the reasons why he felt "very great anxiety" over the course of *perestroyka.*[51]

November 1988 was a busy month in Minsk. In the atmosphere of uproar over the police assault on the demonstrators, party and Komsomol leaders conducted a series of seminars on the political and cultural thinking of youth. On November 5, 1988, the Civic Council of Martyrology submitted the necessary documents to the Minsk Executive Committee to obtain registration, and one week later issued an appeal "To the Citizens of Belorussia," explaining Martyrology's goals and pointing out that the "main obstacle on the road to democratic and humane renewal is the administrative-command system of leadership in all spheres of public life."[52]

In the face of the rapid spread of informal youth societies, the Popular Front movement, and the contagious example of the independent social movements in the Baltic republics, the Belorussian authorities found themselves forced to take at least some measures to placate demands for restoring the status of Belorussian culture, primarily that of the language. On November 19, 1988, the Supreme Soviet of the BSSR set up a Standing Committee on Nationality and Intranational Relations.[53] As a result of growing concern over issues of national culture, the Ministry of People's Education of

[47] *Bielarus*, No. 357a, March 1989, p. 1.

[48] See, for example, *Vecherniy Minsk*, Oct. 24, 1988; ibid., Oct. 25, 1988; and *Zvyazda*, Oct. 27, 1988. These articles were reprinted by many local newspapers.

[49] *Belorusskaya Tribuna*, Samizdat, No. 3, Dec. 18, 1988.

[50] Ibid., No. 1, Dec. 4, 1988.

[51] *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 9, 1988.

[52] *Martyraloh*, Samizdat, No. 1, 1989, p. 3.

[53] *Zvyazda*, Jan. 29, 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the BSSR resolved to "upgrade the prestige of the native language." Thus, beginning in the 1989–90 school year, Russian-language primary schools were to begin to teach Belorussian one year earlier, in the second grade, instead of in the third grade. The authorities also announced plans to increase the number of Belorussian-language books.[54]

At the same time, the party stepped up its efforts to better prepare its cadres to rebut its opponents in the debates over restructuring. "Formation of the historical consciousness and culture of young people" was the topic of a crash seminar for party and Komsomol lecturers. The internal memo of the Minsk *gorkom* discussed above called on party members to switch from "the defensive position assumed by the vast majority of party and ideological organs" to "an ideological offensive in all places and on all levels."[55]

Belorussian Youth Mobilizes

At the second convention of youth groups, held on January 14–15, 1989, 246 delegates representing 66 self-managing societies converged in Vilnius from all over Belorussia. They went to Vilnius because the authorities in Minsk prevented them from holding the convention in their own capital by setting exorbitant rental charges for the hall, limiting the convention time to one day, and prohibiting the display of national emblems, white-red-white flags, and *Pahonya*. The last demand was particularly unacceptable for the organizers because it amounted to a prohibition of the symbols of Belorussian national identity.

The central press in Moscow took the side of those discriminated against by the local authorities. A lengthy report of the conflict and the Diet in *Pravda* concluded that "it was clear: Belorussian youth was interested not in artificial, made-up problems, but those that really exist in the republic, which require taking into account various points of view and demand decisions by common agreement."[56] Official Belorussian publications, by contrast, remained silent about the conflict between youth and the authorities and about the second General Diet itself.

After two days of deliberations, the Diet issued an "Appeal to Belorussian Youth" in the name of the Confederation of Belorussian Youth Societies. The Appeal's introduction sounded an optimistic note:

In spite of severe bureaucratic pressure, events took place during the last months that prove that BELORUSSIAN RENEWAL has a future. We have in mind meetings of many thousands of people that were held in the Freedom Square in Minsk, in Novapolatsk, Grodno, the movement in the Vitebsk region against a nuclear power station. The events in Minsk on October 30 demonstrated that the top republican leadership cannot hold on to their levers of power except by force. They have completely lost the right to be called leaders let alone "people's electees." On the other hand, after October 30, people returned home with a new feeling. They realized that they were a nation. Many of us received our christening there. We advanced to a new stage, and it should be understood and reinforced.[57]

The Appeal also treats such subjects as the sovereignty of Belorussia, democratization, the economy, military matters, and national language and culture. It maintains that on the basis of the constitutions of the BSSR and the USSR, and as a consequence of its United Nations membership, Belorussia should regain its independence, reinforce that independence with appropriate legislation, and then establish ties with other countries. The Appeal calls for the abolition of the privileged position of the Communist Party and argues that a multiparty system would provide real guarantees against reversion to Stalinism. A political party, the Appeal argues, should be based on moral authority. The existence of other parties would, the Appeal maintains, lead to the "self-purification of the Communist Party and to the formulation of the best possible policy."[58]

In the economic realm, the Appeal castigates "the arbitrariness of all-Union ministries," supports increased scope for self-managing businesses, and calls for the return of private farming with the right of inheritance. It also touches briefly on other narrower issues involving social matters and the environment.

The Appeal briefly treats military matters. It calls for the formation of Belorussian national units in the armed forces, full disclosure of the Soviet military budget, allowing conscientious objectors alternate forms of service, and student exemption from the military draft until graduation.

Also in January 1989, Belorussians participated for the first time in a conference of the National Democratic Movements of the Peoples of the USSR, which took place in Vilnius. Syarzhuk Nekhames and Vadzim Alek-

[54] *Sovetskaya Belorussiya*, Dec. 21, 1988.
[55] *Belorusskaya Tribuna*, Samizdat, No. 1, Dec. 4, 1988.
[56] *Pravda* (Moscow), Jan. 17, 1989.
[57] *Supolnasts'*, No. 1, Jan. 14–15, 1989, p. 1.
[58] Ibid., p. 2.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sandrovich represented the *Pahonya* Club and the *samizdat* newspaper *Belorusskaya Tribuna* respectively. Other republics represented at the conference included Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. The conference adopted a "Charter for Freedom of the Enslaved Nations of the USSR," which stated: "History has shown that the very existence of a multi-ethnic empire is an anachronism that creates intolerable conditions for all the nations that inhabit it." The document proclaimed that every nation has the right to individual development, that pluralism is a fundamental political principle, and called for pluralism in interethnic relations.[59]

The Minsk Executive Committee (city government), facing many negative reports about the violent dispersal of the demonstration on October 30 and the challenge of the informal groups who held their convention outside of the republic, decided to sanction a mass meeting on February 19 in the Dynama municipal stadium. The initiators of the event were the Organizational Committee of the BPF and the Confederation of Belorussian Youth Societies.

During the four-hour meeting, which was opened by Mayor Uladzimir Mikhasyow, such issues as the revival of the language, ecology, and nuclear energy were raised. Since the Chernobyl' disaster, which resulted in the contamination of one-fifth of the BSSR's arable land and made necessary the permanent evacuation of 127 settlements,[60] ecology has become a painful and hotly debated issue, with republic officials being blamed for belated action, neglect, and callousness. A number of speakers at the Dynama rally addressed these subjects without challenge from regime spokesmen. *Krasnaya Zvezda,* in covering the rally, noted regretfully that "specialists from the republic were unable fully, authoritatively—and what is important—convincingly to prove an absence of danger, answer all the questions raised by the speakers, and present their own program for a cleaner environment."[61]

Basing itself on the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which maintains the right of citizens to participate in their government, the meeting called for the repeal of the leading role of the CPSU. The rally also demanded the formation of Belorussian national units in the armed forces, which would presumably allow Belorussian youth to remain within their own linguistic and cultural milieu and be shielded from Russification. Another resolution denounced pre-electoral meetings that blocked the candidacies of reformers for seats in the imminent elections to the new USSR Congress of People's Deputies. The national spirit was much in evidence at the stadium where white-red-white flags outnumbered the official red-and-green flags and where such slogans as "Sovereignty to *Belarus,*" "New Constitution for the Belorussian SSR," and "Official Status for the Belorussian Language" expressed the mood and hopes of the crowd. According to one eye-witness report, "practically everyone voted for legalization of the BPF, while only one-fifth of the participants were members of the Front."[62]

Krasnaya Zvezda gave generally favorable treatment to the meeting and presents an example of how Moscow attempts to marshal support for *perestroyka* from below. *Krasnaya Zvezda*'s correspondent, Colonel A. Smolyanko—a Belorussian—took advantage of his newspaper's tolerance for divergent views to side with those who challenged the entrenched bureaucracy. He noted that the meeting made "a number of specific proposals" and that "a vast majority—and that's the main point—spoke out firmly in behalf of uniting all forces in affirmation of the irreversibility of *perestroyka.*" *Krasnaya Zvezda* reported the number of participants at 40,000.[63] TASS's estimate was 30,000. A source in Minsk for Radio Liberty's Belorussian Service put the number at "near 50,000."

But the republican authorities took a different view of the largest "informal" rally. They could not prevent the rally, but they were able to distort its meaning. The two principal dailies, *Sovetskaya Belorussiya* and *Zvyazda,* failed to report on the meeting itself but did publish the views of a half dozen individuals who saw in the gathering no merit but only a display of "personal ambitions." The "coverage" of the rally by the local press was certainly a telling indication of the deep-seated conservatism of the republic's leadership.

The embattled leadership and party apparatus of the republic looked for support to Vadim Medvedev, the chairman of the CPSU's Ideological Commission and one of the most powerful men in the Politburo, when he visited Minsk on March 1. Faced with turbulence at home and criticism from some all-Union publications in Moscow—mainly from *Ogonek* and *Moscow News,* and also occasionally from *Pravda* and *Krasnaya Zvezda*—Belorussian officials complained to Medvedev and warned him that events in the republic might get out of hand. The secretary of the Minsk *gorkom,* Piotr Kraw-

[59]See the press release of the External Representation of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, New York, n.d., "To the Governments and Nations of the World. Charter for Freedom of the Enslaved Nations of the USSR."

[60]*Baltimore Sun,* Feb. 12, 1989.

[61]*Krasnaya Zvezda* (Moscow), Feb. 21, 1989.

[62]*Niva* (Białystok), Apr. 16, 1989.

[63]*Krasnaya Zvezda,* Feb. 21, 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

chanka, told Medvedev that "the storm of negativism that descends upon party workers . . . does not enhance their authority." Mistakes of previous years in the realm of national culture and language, said Krawchanka, had led to "an emotional 'explosion' among the intelligentsia."[64]

V. S. Svyatoshchyk, the head of the republic's Komsomol, who had attended the Vilnius second General Diet of Belorussian youth groups, sounded an even more ominous note. The Confederation of Belorussian Youth Societies, he said, "adopted the platform of a new political organization, an alternative to the Komsomol." Svyatoshchyk said he was "deeply disappointed" with *Pravda*'s uncritical reporting of what happened in Vilnius.[65]

In the elections to the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR on March 26, 1989, and in the two ensuing run-offs, the BPF supported an independent candidates in each of the seven electoral districts of Minsk and supported a number of other independent candidates throughout the republic. Five of the independents were elected: Vasil' Bykaw, Alaksandar Zhurawlyow, Yury Khadyka, Ales' Adamovich, and Alaksandar Dabravolski. Others supported by the BPF also won, including Stanislaw Shushkevich, Ryhor Padbyareski, and Mikalay Ihnatovich.

Yafrem Sakalow, the first secretary of the CPB, was one of 19 candidates who ran unopposed, and he was elected. However, two high officials—First Secretary of the Minsk *gorkom* Uladzimir Halko and First Secretary of the Gomel oblast Party Committee Yury Khusainow—lost their elections. In the electoral district where Khusainow ran, a BPF activist critical of him was roughed up by the police. This action, which repelled the voters, ensured Khusainow's defeat.

In rural areas, the authorities had little difficulty in nominating and electing their own candidates. Although the opposition was stronger in Minsk, the CPB retained control over the mass media. The press either passed over in silence or flatly denounced candidates the regime deemed undesirable. The BPF, with only *samizdat* at its disposal, could not match the powerful state-sponsored media.

The Quest for "Belorussianization"

In the past six months, the BSSR's government has made several policy changes in the cultural sphere to meet the concerns of Belorussia's reform movement. Thus, the ministries of culture and education received new heads, Mikhail Dzemchuk and Yawhen Vaytovich respectively. Both Dzemchuk and Vaytovich are middle-aged Belorussians who are energetic in promoting the national culture and outspoken in their support of official status for the Belorussian language. Both ministers are also more accessible to the press and more willing to address directly the issue of discrimination against Belorussian language and culture.

Consequently, some improvements are taking place in teaching the Belorussian language, which has been one of the most salient issues. For example, in April of this year, the newly appointed Minister of Education Dzemchuk reported that teaching the Belorussian language would be upgraded along the following lines:

- In September 1989, Belorussian will be taught in Russian-language primary schools (which educate 77.7 percent of all school children) from the first grade up (instead of from the second as had been decided in November 1988) and 14 hours a week (instead of four).
- Junior high school students will be required to pass examinations in Belorussian to graduate.
- Everyone entering pedagogical colleges and pedagogical departments in universities will be required to pass a test in Belorussian language and literature.
- The number of hours devoted to the Belorussian language in pedagogical colleges will be tripled (from 30–50 to 100–150 per year).
- The humanities and social sciences and some science subjects will be taught in Belorussian.
- Beginning in the 1989–90 academic year, Belorussian will be a required course in all technical schools.
- Minsk, which up until now has not had a single Belorussian-language school, will have nine beginning in September of this year.[66]

Similar efforts are being made in other areas. For example, Belorussian television has begun a series called "We Speak Belorussian." New Minister of Culture Vaytovich has said that the staff in his ministry "is gradually switching to Belorussian."[67] According to the Minsk monthly, *Belarus'*, Belorussian "is increasingly heard on public transport, in the streets, and on radio and television."[68]

Yet, difficulties and obstacles on the road to Belorussianization are to be expected, both because of outright hostility on the part of many monolingual (Russian-speaking) bureaucrats, and because of the sheer lack of specialists and textbooks, dictionaries, and films in

[64] *Sel'skaya Gazeta* (Minsk), Mar. 3, 1989.
[65] Ibid.
[66] *Nastawnitskaya Hazeta* (Minsk), Apr. 8, 1989; *LiM*, Apr. 19, 1989.
[67] *Zvyazda*, Mar. 25, 1989.
[68] Valery Lapin, "I Don't Speak My Native Language," *Belarus'* (Minsk), December 1988, p. 7.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Belorussian, although, as will be seen, this problem is beginning to be addressed.

The most fundamental issue of the day is the demand for official status for the Belorussian language in the republic. Every day, a flood of articles and letters pours into editorial offices clamoring for the restoration of official status to Belorussian. Activists in the BPF point out that during the first decade of Soviet rule, Belorussian was spoken throughout the governmental bodies and schools at all levels. They claim this policy was the true embodiment of Leninist principles in the nationality sphere. Indeed, a party historian, Piotr Petrykaw, noted recently that those accused of "national nihilism" and "Russification" found themselves "in disarray in the face of powerful pressure by partisans of Belorussian as the obligatory state language."[69]

The CPB is split with regard to the issue of Belorussianization and associated matters. About half of the membership of the Organizational Committee of the BPF consists of party members. Occasionally the press reports that lower-level party functionaries take the lead in advocating the return to the native language and culture. For example, the section entitled "Culture and Education" in the theses on "the most important tasks of restructuring," adopted in March of this year by the Minsk party organization and the city executive committee, bears some similarity to the BPF's program. One of its goals is "to support the growth of national consciousness as an important factor in the restructuring and democratization of our life, and to return to the people what was unduly neglected—their cultural values and national traditions."[70] Minsk *gorkom* Secretary Krawchanka expressed confidence that "the Belorussian language will have state status and we should get ready for that psychologically."[71] Moreover, as we have seen, some influential voices in the government, including the ministers of culture and education, favor an official status for Belorussian.

An important step in this direction was taken on June 27, 1989, when nearly 300 delegates representing almost every *rayon* in the BSSR participated in the constituent congress of the Belorussian Language Society. Founding organizations of this society included the Writers' Union, the republican ministries of education and culture, the institutes of language and literature of the BSSR Academy of Sciences, the State Publishing Committee, the State Television and Radio Committee, and the Belorussian Society of Friendship with Foreign Countries. According to the charter of the Belorussian Language Society, its goals are: "the use of the Belorussian language in all spheres of social life in the BSSR, the all-round development of the [Belorussian] language, preservation of its purity and originality, retention and development of national culture and folk traditions, formation of national consciousness, and the elimination of national nihilism."[72]

The constituent assembly elected a 57-member council of the new society. The chairman of the Society is Nil Hilevich, a writer-scholar and first secretary of the BSSR Writers' Union. Belorussian Deputy Prime Minister Nina Mazay told the constituent assembly that implementation of the charter of the Society had already begun; the government and the Academy of Sciences had taken a number of steps to prepare pedagogical cadres for the teaching of the Belorussian language.[73]

However, top party and government leaders, particularly party First Secretary Sakalow and the president of the BSSR, Heorhi Tarazevich, have been silent on the subject of the language issue specificallly and the Belorussianization of the republic in general. In view of this silence and the wide opposition to Belorussianization in the republic's party and government apparatuses, the outcome is not certain.

In contrast to the Baltic republics, where movements for national revival and political pluralism have recently received significant support from republic party and government officials, officials in Belorussia have only grudgingly moved in the direction of political change and cultural liberalization. In some ways, advocates of cultural and political change face more obstacles in Belorussia than in the Baltic republics. As noted above, the Russification of Belorussia began in the early 1930's, while the Baltic republics were annexed only in 1940, and consistent Russification policies there were not even attempted until after the war. Moreover, the evidence suggests that in Belorussia more Russians occupy key positions than in any of the Baltic republics.

Some recent trends in legislation and administrative rulings reflect the power of the conservatives. In February, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the BSSR ruled that "from now on, all undertakings, meetings, rallies, and various 'unusual events' will be attended by those journalists who have special passes issued by the Ministry of Internal Affairs."[74] This severe restriction on news coverage was followed by an even more drastic measure. On March 31, 1989, the Presidium of the Supreme

[69] *Sovetskaya Belorussiya*, Apr. 26, 1989.
[70] *Nastawnitskaya Hazeta*, Mar. 22, 1989.
[71] Ibid.
[72] *LiM*, June 9, 1989.
[73] Ibid., June 30, 1989.
[74] *Izvestiya* (Moscow), Feb. 12, 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Soviet of the BSSR passed a decree amending the Code of the BSSR on Administrative Offenses. The decree banned the use of national symbols (the white-red-white flag and *Pahonya*) and prohibited the publication of *samizdat* materials. The next move along these lines can be expected shortly as a result of the decision taken by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on April 4, 1989, to stiffen "criminal responsibility for state crimes."[75]

These legislative measures are viewed by many in the press as infringements on the spirit of *glasnost'* and *perestroyka* as defined by Gorbachev and the 19th Party Conference. To be sure, not all the criticism that pours into the editorial offices for publication appears in print. However, the weekly *Litaratura i Mastatstva,* in reviewing its mail, described the decree of March 31 as "an attempt on the life of restructuring" with "loopholes for rampant administrative-police arbitrariness"; it described Articles 167 (2) and 172 (the first, banning national symbols; the second, restricting the use of copying machines) as "contradicting the notions of restructuring and openness."[76]

The Founding Congress of the BPF

What occurred in Minsk in January of this year, when city authorities prevented the Second General Diet of Informal Groups from taking place, was repeated again in June when local bureaucrats obstructed the convening of the founding congress of the BPF. Again, the Lithuanians came to the rescue by welcoming the embattled Belorussians to Vilnius. On June 24–25, 1989, more than 400 delegates from all over Belorussia took part in the formal establishment of the Belorussian Popular Front. The delegates included prominent scholars and artists from Minsk, Grodno, and other Belorussian cities. In the hall, decorated with white-red-white flags and *Pahonya,* the delegates debated current problems, elected a leadership, and adopted resolutions on a series of issues.

Zyanon Paznyak became the BPF's chairman, and Yury Khadyka, a Doctor of Physical and Mathematical Sciences and a USSR People's Deputy from Minsk, and Mikhas Tkachow, a Doctor of History from Grodno were elected vice-chairmen. In addition, a 55-member Diet was also elected.

The congress accepted the BPF's charter and program and adopted 10 resolutions and appeals. In an appeal to the citizens of the Belorussian republic, the BPF defined itself:

*The BPF is a mass socio-political movement. Its goal is to create a society and to renew the identity (*samabytnasts'*) of the Belorussian nation based on principles of democracy and humanism, to secure conditions for a free and full-fledged development of culture both of the majority of inhabitants and of Belorussia's national minorities.*

The appeal went on to reassure the authorities both in Minsk and in Moscow that the BPF wants to work within the system to realize the goals of *perestroyka*:

The BPF will conduct its activities within a framework of the Constitution of the BSSR and according to the Program and Charter adopted by this congress. The BPF aims at defending the interests of the working people, encouraging citizens to be socially active, developing their political, legal, and national consciousness, and guaranteeing the irreversibility of perabudova *in the BSSR.*[77]

Other resolutions dealt with such issues as the BPF's relationship to popular movements in other republics, interethnic relations within the BSSR, Belorussian-Lithuanian ties, political pluralism, religious matters, state status for the Belorussian language, and Belorussian national symbols.

Some of these resolutions bear on the issue of Belorussia's national minorities and draw attention to the fact that thus far no independent groups have emerged in Belorussia that claim to represent the interests of minorities—mainly Russians—against the potential threat of Belorussianization. Such groups as *Yedinstvo* in Lithuania and the "Interfronts" in Latvia, Estonia, and Moldavia, have received the overt and covert support of some regime authorities as a means to curb popular movements for reform, which are made up largely of these republics' indigenous nationalities. With this danger in mind, the BPF and other Belorussian groups have been careful not to overlook the concerns of Belorussia's ethnic minorities. Thus, in his message to the constituent assembly of the BPF, Vasil' Bykaw said:

Our movement for perabudova *is national in form and democratic in content. All the nationalities that comprise the Belorussian state will find a place within it. We are not excluding from it our brothers the Russian*

[75]Ibid., Apr. 10, 1989.
[76]*LiM,* Apr. 19, 1989.
[77]Radio Liberty Belorussian Service, June 29, 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

people with whom we share our land and fate, who for a long time have innocently suffered together with us, nor do we exclude the tragic Jewish nation with whom during the entire course of our history we have shared the modest fruits of our land. The Poles and Lithuanians are our historical brothers, and we have countless examples of shared and truly brotherly coexistence. . . .[78]

Here we see again the Belorussian appeal to a shared history with their neighbors as a means to develop a common program for political and cultural change.

The Fear Factor

Belorussian society at large, having lost "every fourth one"[79] in the Stalinist terror, still suffers from the traumas of the past. "We are up to our ears in Stalinism and are consoling ourselves with the 'new thinking'. . . . we are still quite timid, although we have been learning to think critically," observed writer Vasil' Yakavenka.[80] A public lecturer and professor from the Minsk Institute of Culture, L. Smilavitski, wonders "how to restore a human face to people if they are terrified. Not all of them have overcome the sense of fear and uncertainty."[81] Nil Hilevich, blames "the same cursed fear," which makes people "skate on the surface" when they analyze social phenomena.[82]

Such psychological barriers seem to be a signficant impediment to restructuring in Belorussia. Calls for independent thinking and individual initiative flow from above, but the response from below has been slow to come. Initiative is thwarted both by fear and by self-serving bureaucrats who find themselves free to define *perestroyka* to suit their own interests.

However, the most audacious intellectuals call for changes at the very top of the republic's hierarchy. In one of the most penetrating analyses of the political situation in the Belorussian SSR, Henrykh Dalidovich, a writer of the younger generation, concluded that "the upper echelon of government, formed in the period of stagnation on principles of friendly connections, should be replaced." Dalidovich pointed to one of the reasons why the Belorussian leadership underestimated the importance of the cultural agenda: "Imagine," he exclaims, "in the republic's party organization among first secretaries of the city and regional committees about 96 percent are, as we say, technocrats."[83] BPF Chairman Paznyak, one of the most outspoken critics of the present regime in Minsk, put it quite bluntly: "The leaders [of the BSSR] long ago showed themselves to be politically bankrupt; therefore, without personnel changes in the republic's leadership, *perestroyka* will fail to advance."[84]

The leadership, of course, knows the nature of the game, as noted by the perceptive observer, Yevgeniy Budinas: "The issue is not economic or administrative reforms, it is political struggle, creating a new political system. Political struggle, however, is a struggle for power, which—as is known—is not given away without a fight."[85]

What Lies Ahead?

On the premise that Gorbachev serves out his five-year (or perhaps 10-year) presidential term, Belorussianization of the republic—that is, the return of Belorussia to its historical and cultural roots, to its language and customs—will most likely slowly advance. One factor favoring progress in this regard is the large number of young people who make up the informal groups. These people who have no fear are motivated to political action by a deep sense of moral revulsion with the policies of the past. As the awareness of their cultural roots grows stronger and their connections with the outside world develop and expand, the Belorussian population will also become politically more assertive.

The big question mark is the role of the party. Should the CPB realize that a society in turmoil over cultural matters loses much of its economic vitality, it could work for Belorussianization because official willingness to liberalize cultural policies would reinforce society's trust toward the authorities on all levels. However, the Communist Party of Belorussia, the primary agent of Russification in the past, is well-organized and deeply embedded in all social and economic institutions—and bent on remaining in power. The growing awareness throughout society of the need to upgrade the quality of life by liberating the citizenry and the nation from the tutelage of one party certainly will conflict with the party's entrenched power and interests. This fundamental struggle—over the power to decide the fate of the nation—will be prolonged and bitter.

[78] *LiM*, July 7, 1989.
[79] "Every fourth one" is a phrase that originally referred to those killed by the Nazis during the occupation of Belorussia in 1941–44.
[80] *Sovetskaya Belorussiya*, Feb. 19, 1989.
[81] *Chyrvonaya Zmena*, Mar. 2, 1989.
[82] *LiM*, Mar. 10, 1989.
[83] Ibid., Mar. 31, 1989.
[84] *Sovetskaya Molodezh'* (Riga), Apr. 20, 1989.
[85] *Vek XX i Mir* (Moscow), No. 3, 1989, p. 30.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lithuanian National Politics

V. Stanley Vardys

The process of social, economic, and political change in Lithuania defies simplistic characterizations frequently found in the Western media. If pressed for labels, one can best identify it as an articulate movement toward national independence and democracy. What began in large measure as an initiative for democratization to support the renewal of socialism has become a movement for national liberation, for seeking emancipation both from the Soviet empire and from Soviet socialism. Independent groups seek to dismantle the Communist Party's monopoly of power in favor of a pluralistic social and political order. These goals have quickly won grass-roots support among almost all segments of Lithuanian society.

The purpose of this article is to examine the origins and scope of this unprecedented development and to highlight the interplay between the main actors of the drama, namely the Lithuanian Reconstruction Movement (*Lietuvos Persitvarkymo Sąjūdis*), the Communist Party of Lithuania (CPL), and the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Because the play is not over and because the actors are still changing their scripts, observations and especially conclusions on the outcome can be only tentative. However, enough material exists to allow discussion of the meaning of this process of change for Lithuania and for the Soviet Union as a whole.

Popular Demands for Change

The rise of *Sąjūdis* and of other social groups that drive the current process of change in the republic was made possible by the policy of *glasnost'* enunciated by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Pushing for badly needed economic reform, Gorbachev chose democratization and *glasnost'* as tools to subject regime bureaucrats to some measure of popular control and to promote social initiative and creativity. The three Baltic popular fronts use this rationale for legitimizing their programs, which have gone far beyond *perestroyka* (restructuring) as defined by Moscow. "We are convinced," the three movements stated in a joint declaration of May 14, 1989, "that alongside the process of broadening openness, mass democratic movements are the only guarantee for the continuation and irreversibility of the radical restructuring of society."[1] The use of the word "radical" shows that the Lithuanians and the other Balts seek to interpret *perestroyka* in the spirit of their own political cultures. The Lithuanians seek a pluralistic society, not merely the "pluralistic socialism" Gorbachev intends. In the economic realm, Moscow has confronted "radical" demands concerning private ownership and management. Finally, the quest for political and economic change takes place in an atmosphere of revived Lithuanian national consciousness. Georgijus Efremovas, a leading member of *Sąjūdis,* has remarked that "democratic liberation movements usually are closely connected to the national idea that will likely be institutionalized in the Baltic region. To battle against the victory of this idea is immoral, imprudent, and hopeless."[2]

Western observers may be correct in arguing that in Lithuania and in the other Baltic countries, Gorbachev sought to mobilize energies generated by popular movements of national liberation for "constructive purposes,"[3] that these popular revolutions can be "co-opted," or that for the tolerance thus far shown by Moscow, the Baltic nations, including Lithuania, "will re-

V. Stanley Vardys is Professor of Political Science at the University of Oklahoma (Norman). He is author of The Catholic Church, Dissent and Nationality in Soviet Lithuania *(1978) and of other books and articles published in the United States and Western Europe.*

[1] "Appeal to the Democratic Movements of the Soviet Union," a telefaxed statement secured by Lithuanian Information Center, Brooklyn, New York (hereafter—LIC).

[2] *Komjaunimo Tiesa* (Vilnius), May 1, 1989.

[3] *The Observer* (London), Oct. 23, 1988.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ward him by leading the country in economic restructuring."[4] Gorbachev was probably also convinced that the CPL and the other Baltic parties would be able to ride the tiger of resurgent nationalism instead of being devoured by it.

Although *glasnost'* led to a resurgence of nationalist sentiments and the emergence of reform groups in Lithuania, these have been conditioned by two elements of Lithuanian political culture: first, a deep commitment to historic national values and the tradition of national resistance to occupying powers and, second, the brief experience of democracy in the interwar period.

These elements of Lithuania's political culture require further comment. Lithuanian opposition to the first Soviet occupation in 1940–41 culminated in a successful revolt against Stalin's regime a day after the Germans attacked the Soviet Union. A provisional government emerged, which declared independence. The Nazi invaders snuffed out the independent regime, pushing the rebels and their supporters into the underground.[5] Yet, Lithuanian anti-Nazi resistance, with the exception of the Communists, was non-violent. Passive resistance groups, however, sabotaged or frustrated more than one German war policy. Then, after the return of the Red Army, anti-Soviet partisans took up arms against the Communists.[6] Guerrilla war, little noticed in the West, lasted from 1944 to 1952 and cost tens of thousands of casualties. Mass deportations and inhuman persecution by Soviet authorities accompanied this warfare.

Lithuania's short-lived experience with democracy colored popular understanding of reform. People are still alive who remember genuine elections and political competition. Historical memories of free elections do not necessarily serve the interests of the reformers in Moscow.

The dissidents and their decades-long struggle cannot be forgotten either. In the 1970's and 1980's, Lithuania produced more dissident publications per capita than any other Soviet republic. The Helsinki Group, the Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights,[7] and other groups showered the government with petitions and complaints of human rights violations. Politically, the most memorable was the appeal of 1979 condemning the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 and demanding that the Soviet and German governments denounce the treaty and its political consequences and restore independence to the Baltic states. The Catholic rights movement also was especially strong and articulate.[8]

Taken together, Lithuanian nationalism, democratic traditions, and dissent provided the basis for a program much different from and more far-reaching than the CPL's and the CPSU's efforts at *perestroyka* and democratization. It was inevitable that popular demands for change would quickly outstrip the limited efforts of the regime to engineer directed change from above.

The CPL

At first, neither party leaders nor, surprisingly, many party intellectuals and managers, wanted to commit themselves to a reform process that was likely to involve considerable political risk. Several factors explain this attitude. First, Soviet rule has been less threatening to the survival of the Lithuanian nation in Lithuania than it has been to the Estonians and the Latvians in their titular republics. The proportion of Lithuanians among the population of the Lithuanian SSR has remained a steady 80 percent, even after the 1989 census. The percentage of Russian immigrants remained under 10 percent, as in the 1960's and 1970's. Second, Lithuanians are generally cautious and not usually aggressive. Doubting the permanence of Gorbachev's rule and cynical as a result of previous experiences with Moscow's "reform" efforts, most Lithuanians were slow to take the newly developing situation earnestly enough to risk taking initiatives. Moreover, some degree of fear, apathy, and alienation had come to characterize almost all members of the population. Finally, the CPL leadership, especially after the death of First Secretary Antanas Sniečkus in 1976, fell into the hands of mediocre *apparatchiks*. Petras Griškevičius, who

[4]*The New York Times*, Sept. 2, 1988.

[5]The best account of the rebellion in English has been written by Zenonas Ivinskis, in V. Stanley Vardys, Ed., *Lithuania Under the Soviets*, New York, F. A. Praeger, 1965, pp. 61–84; see also Seppo Myllyniemi, *Die Neuordnung der baltischen Länder 1941–1944* (The New Order in the Baltic Countries 1941–1944), Helsinki, Societas Historica Finlandiae, 1973, pp. 72 ff.

[6]See V. Stanley Vardys, "The Partisan Movement in Postwar Lithuania," *Slavic Review* (New York), September 1963, pp. 499–522; Kęstutis Girnius, *Partizanų kovos Lietuvoje* (Partisan Battles in Lithuania), Chicago, Į Laisvę Fondas, 1987.

[7]The Helsinki Group was established in 1976 to monitor Soviet violations of civil rights guaranteed by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1975. It was an illegal group that ultimately lost effectiveness because of the arrest and emigration of its members. The Helsinki Group was revived in 1988. The Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights was created in the underground shortly after the election of Pope John Paul II as head of the Roman Catholic Church. It monitored and wrote petitions in cases involving freedom of religion. Its leaders were arrested. The members of the Committee were Catholic clergymen for the most part, but the scope of its work went beyond the Catholic Church.

[8]See V. Stanley Vardys, *The Catholic Church, Dissent and Nationality in Soviet Lithuania*, Boulder, CO, and New York, East European Quarterly/Columbia University Press, 1978.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

took over as first secretary after Sniečkus's death, conceded that *perestroyka* was a "revolutionary process" but had a very conservative understanding of *glasnost'*. Certain public criticisms, according to Griškevičius, "obstructed harmonious common efforts." It was permissible to reexamine the past, but historical events had to be judged from "class positions." Griškevičius frowned upon historians who sought to fill in historical "blank spots."[9]

Griškevičius died on November 14, 1987. On December 1, a new first party secretary, Ringaudas Songaila, was promoted to this position from the chairmanship of the Presidium of the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet. The new first secretary, whose tenure proved to be short-lived, followed in his predecessor's footsteps and predictably kept the brakes on *glasnost'*. Thus, on January 26, 1988, a report of the CPL's Central Committee plenum intoned old tunes: the party had demonstrated weakness combating "alien" philosophies, it did not stress "international" and "class-conscious" education; "atheistic education" was unsatisfactory; "nationalist and clerical extremists" were not receiving sufficient "rebuff." The plenum avowed that it was necessary to "unmask demagogues and opportunists who seek to speculate with democracy and public opinion for their selfish interests and for the purpose of discrediting reconstruction."[10]

Attacks on the dissidents and the nationally conscious intelligentsia followed. Thus, the CPL daily *Tiesa* intensified its propaganda against *The Chronicle of the Catholic Church of Lithuania,* a *samizdat* publication that had been periodically appearing for 16 years and had attracted world-wide attention to the persecution of the Catholic Church and it believers.

Songaila's regime then took various police measures, some of them violent, to prevent the Lithuanians from observing the 70th anniversary of Lithuanian independence on February 16, 1988.[11] Concentrations of military and police personnel, especially in the capital city, made public meetings and demonstrations impossible. The regime apparently considered the occasion a crucial challenge not only because the authorities knew of local plans for the celebration but also because President Ronald Reagan had issued a proclamation supporting Lithuanian independence and inviting a commemoration of the anniversary.[12] A large group of United States senators also had written to Gorbachev asking that Soviet authorities not interfere with the festivities.[13] At the same time, Soviet President Andrey Gromyko had come to Vilnius in early February to denounce "the lunatics abroad" who did not understand how "mighty" Soviet power in Lithuania was.[14] However, none of these activities stopped the independence commemoration by the people. Banished from the streets and meeting halls, demonstrators flooded the churches, where special masses were said and sermons preached. Songaila's regime then went after the pastors who had allowed such "anti-Soviet" acts.

Nationally Conscious Intelligentsia

Groups of Lithuanian intellectuals and writers had become restless prior to Griškevičius's death. As if to test the new leadership that succeeded Griškevičius, on December 1, 1987, at a meeting of the Writers' Union, a group of leading critics and poets took to task the editor of their professional weekly *Literatūra ir Menas* (Literature and the Arts), which is published by the Ministry of Culture and the Writers' Union. One writer protested the editor's fear of publishing a collective letter that took issue with some ideas expressed in an article written by one of the republic's leaders. A poet, Sigitas Geda, complained about censorship and demands that he change his poetry before publication; and Vytautas Kubilius, a highly respected but ideologically deviant literary critic, told the gathering that "society is indignant about [*Literatūra ir Menas*'s] facelessness, writers are ashamed to contribute, members of the editorial board are resigning one after another, while the leadership of the Writers' Union keeps the 'best relations' with the editors. This decaying newspaper can be revived only by contributors who think originally and courageously. Are the reserves of Lithuanian intellectual talent so poor that we can not find our own V. Korotich or M. Chaklays?"[15] Antanas Drilinga, the editor of *Literatūra ir Menas,* survived for another year, but the newspaper soon became one of the flagships of *glasnost'* and *perestroyka* in Lithuania. Another writer, the irascible and aggressive Communist Vytautas Petkevičius, who demonstrated his loyalty to Moscow by fighting against the partisans for the establishment of Soviet rule, loudly insisted that despite the breezes of reform the atmosphere for creative activity in the repub-

[9]See his article, "The Focus of *Perestroyka* Is Man," *Pergalė* (Vilnius), February 1987, pp. 3–11 passim.

[10]*Tiesa* (Vilnius), Jan. 29, 1988.

[11]See the interview with General Stasy Lisauskas, the Minister of the Interior, in *Gimtasis Kraštas* (Vilnius), Apr. 7–13, 1988, pp. 1–2.

[12]See Saulius Girnius, "Commemorations of Independence Day," in Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty (hereafter—RFE-RL), *Radio Free Europe Research* (Munich), Baltic Area Situation Report No. 3, Mar. 24, 1989.

[13]Ibid.

[14]See *Tiesa,* Feb. 3–6, 1988.

[15]*Literatūra ir Menas* (Vilnius), Dec. 1, 1987, pp. 2, 5. Vitaliy Korotich is the editor of the liberal magazine *Ogonek,* and Riga poet Maris Chaklays is editor of the Latvian literary publication *Literatūra un Māksla.*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lic was "still unfavorable." He bluntly put the responsibility for the situation on CPL "activists, men of little talent who parrot some memorized slogans." He advised the party "to put them in their place" and never again "to allow them to drown out the creative and sane mind of our nation."[16]

Soon however, Lithuanian "Korotiches" and "Chaklays's" began to make their appearance in the weekly *Gimtasis Kraštas* (Native Country) and the daily *Komjaunimo Tiesa* (Truth of the Komsomol). The first was originally published for the consumption of Lithuanians abroad, but it was distributed at home as well. The editor, Algimantas Čekuolis, made the weekly extremely popular by publishing unflinching exposés of the system's sins. Čekuolis's political connections indicated that some elements of the republic's leadership had decided that the time had come for Lithuania to implement *glasnost'* even though it involved political risks.

In late 1988 and early 1989, the intellectuals were busily meeting among themselves to discuss possible courses of action. At an Artists' Union meeting, for example, Arvydas Juozaitis, a philosopher at Vilnius University, read a remarkable lecture on national sovereignty, which became widely known and admired. At its plenary meeting of April 4, 1988, the Writers' Union proposed that the Lithuanian language be declared the official language of the republic and that every year a day of remembrance be held for Stalin's victims. In the literary journal *Pergalė*, Romualdas Granauskas published a short story showing that collective farms were organized by force and that the life of collective farm workers from generation to generation was drenched in alcohol and death. The tragic state of Lithuania's environment received much more attention, although it reflected negatively on bureaucrats in both the republic and in Moscow. Also in April, new questions were raised about Lithuanian history during the crucial period from the late 1930's to the early 1950's. For example, Stalinist cruelty was held responsible for the 1944–52 partisan war. This finding exonerated the partisans from the charge of "banditry" and elevated their struggle to a legitimate, albeit mistaken, defensive action.[17]

Principal Players

Before highlighting the dramatic political interplay that on May 18, 1989, culminated in a formal declaration of sovereignty and proclamation of the ultimate goal of complete independence by the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet, it is necessary to identify and characterize the main actors in the Lithuanian political drama: the CPL, the leaders of the CPSU, and especially the new, "informal" groups. The first two are known entities. Unknown are the grass-roots organizations that have mushroomed since mid-1988. Foremost among the independent organizations is *Sąjūdis*. Others were either spawned by *Sąjūdis* or organized to oppose some or all of *Sąjūdis*'s goals. Still others organized themselves independently. The list of such organizations is long, but most important are the Lithuanian Freedom League and *Vienybė-Yedinstvo-Jedność,* which is made up largely of Russians and Poles. Finally, it is also necessary to include the Catholic Church, an institution that has long represented and defended the aspirations of the Lithuanian people.

Sąjūdis. As noted above, *Sąjūdis* is the main engine that drives social and political change in Lithuania. The organization was established by party and non-party intellectuals to consolidate all segments of society for implementing *perestroyka* in Lithuania.[18] *Sąjūdis* was born in the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, which on May 23, 1988, established a commission to propose changes in the Lithuanian SSR constitution needed to accommodate *perestroyka,* democratization, and *glasnost'*.[19] Three days later, the Academy hosted two distinguished Estonian economists from the Estonian Academy of Sciences, who discussed the newly organized Estonian People's Front and the Estonian model for economic self-government. Other meetings followed that considered the establishment of a reform group similar to the Estonian People's Front.

Determination to form a popular front was solidified by two events, namely, the election of CPL delegates to the 19th Conference of the CPSU and decisions taken by Moscow on the expansion of the Lithuanian chemical industry.[20] The delegates to the party conference were elected "the old way," that is, they were appointed by the CPL leadership—contrary, party progressives claimed, to the CPSU Central Committee's instructions. The Lithuanian party thus showed itself unaffected by the new spirit of *glasnost'* and democratization. Moscow's economic managers betrayed a similar spirit. On June 2, the Lithuanian government announced that central ministry authorities had unilaterally decided to speed up the expansion of giant chemical industries in

[16]*Švyturys* (Vilnius), No. 24, December 1987, p. 8.

[17]See Saulius Girnius, "Debate on Lithuanian History Continues," RFE-RL, *Radio Free Europe Research,* Baltic Area Situation Report No. 2, Feb. 16, 1988; and "A Reevaluation of the Partisan War," ibid., Baltic Area Situation Report No. 5, May 20, 1988.

[18]*Sąjūdžio Žinios* (Vilnius), No. 2. 1988, p. 1.

[19]Ibid., p. 2.

[20]Ibid.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jonava, Kėdainiai, and Mažeikiai—cities that already were choking from pollution and where further enterprise expansion had been forbidden by the Lithuanian government. By riding roughshod over Lithuania's leadership, Moscow's ministries provoked many elements inside and outside the Lithuanian power structure to action.

On June 3, scientists, writers, artists, and professionals of various specialties flooded the Academy of Science's auditorium to vent accumulated grievances and to discuss a course of action. The meeting elected an "initiative group" consisting of 36 prominent scholars and intellectuals to organize a movement for the support of *perestroyka*.[21] *Sąjūdis* was born. Half the membership of the "initiative group" consisted of party members. This fact signaled, of course, a split in the ruling party and also may have indicated a certain restlessness among segments of the Lithuanian *nomenklatura* itself.

It is clear that *Sąjūdis* was born not in cooperation with the party leadership but against its wishes. The CPL distrusted the new organization because it deprived the party of its "leading role" in Lithuanian society. The "initiative group" was even rumored to be hostile to party leaders because it refused to welcome a section chief of the CPL Central Committee at a meeting to which the *apparatchik* came uninvited.[22] However, the new group merely sought independence from the party; it was not inimical to the party. In fact, *Sąjūdis* attempted to certify its loyalty by deciding that it would not accept "people who have attempted to propagate extremist ideas."[23] These "extremists" of course were dissidents, many of whom had spent years in prisons or concentration camps. Eventually, however, *Sąjūdis* became a mass organization; participation (it has no formal membership) was opened to all, including dissidents and former political prisoners.

The new organization used the summer for a feverish and skillful mobilization of public support and on October 22–23, 1988, held its founding congress in Vilnius. Its 1,121 delegates were chosen by professional organizations of Vilnius and Kaunas, from territorial jurisdictions of the republic, and from political, cultural, and social groups.[24] For example, the Lithuanian Freedom League was allocated seven seats in the Congress; the Catholic clergy also received a quota of delegates.

The congress was a middle-class gathering, dominated by intellectuals. Occupationally, the largest group of delegates consisted of scientists, artists, writers, and other professionals. Educationally, more than 77 percent of the delegates were university graduates.

The meeting was also very much a Lithuanian gathering. According to nationality, the delegates were 96 percent Lithuanian, 0.8 percent Russian, 0.6 percent Jewish, and 0.9 percent Polish, with 11 from other ethnic minority backgrounds. If compared to minority percentages in the population, the Russians and Poles were much underrepresented, because delegates were elected from groups supporting *Sąjūdis* and such groups enjoyed little support among the Russian and Polish minorities.

The congress elected a Diet (*Seimas*) of 220 members, which in turn chose *Sąjūdis*'s governing council, consisting of 35 people. Initially, *Sąjūdis* refused to choose a president; however, political developments soon made such a choice necessary.

The congress decided against a formal organization because it would involve the creation of a "bureaucracy," which no one wanted. Thus, in contrast to the Latvian Popular Front, *Sąjūdis* does not have dues-paying membership, only participants and activists, the latter running its local organizations. Only lists of activists are kept. As a result, the Movement's leadership can only estimate the group's size. In March 1989, *Sąjūdis*'s president, Professor Vytautas Landsbergis, who was chosen for that position in November 1988, put the organization's membership at 100,000 to 500,000.[25]

Programmatically, *Sąjūdis* has undergone changes from the time of its inception on June 3, 1988. It was radicalized as a result of its fierce and competitive interplay with the CPL. In October 1988, at the time of its founding Congress, the Movement professed as its goal the "support and deepening" of *perestroyka* initiated by the CPSU;[26] achievement of "sovereignty" in all areas of Lithuanian life within a "Leninist" Soviet federation; and the goal of "pluralist society" with no organization "usurping" political power. Other programmatic goals included a Western-style guarantee of civil rights, eradication of Stalinism, research and reporting on the crimes of the Stalin period, and punishment of those responsible. Finally, although *Sąjūdis* avoided the topics of foreign relations and military affairs, it nevertheless postulated that "Lithuania has to become part of the nuclear-free zone of Europe and its territory must be demilitarized."[27] Were this goal attained, Lithuania would no longer belong to the Warsaw Pact; neither would Soviet troops be stationed on its territory.

[21]Ibid.
[22]Ibid., p. 4.
[23]*Gimtasis Kraštas*, June 9–15, 1988, p. 3.
[24]*Atgimimas* (Vilnius), No. 7, Nov. 15, 1988, p. 7.
[25]Interview in *Tygodnik Powszechny* (Kraków), Feb. 5, 1989, p. 5.
[26]*Atgimimas*, No. 3, Oct. 15, 1988, pp. 6–7 passim.
[27]Ibid.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sąjūdis went on record as a group that "considers national consciousness and expression as independent values and as important factors of social renewal."[28] In concrete policy terms, *Sąjūdis* supported controls on immigration into the republic and the declaration of Lithuanian as the republic's official language. (The organization also sought to guarantee minorities the right to use and develop their languages and cultures.) The program further opposed "state monopoly" over culture, and demanded the establishment of a "national" school system and broad cultural contacts with foreign countries. Normalization of relations with the Catholic Church and other religious denominations, and the abolition of state-sponsored atheist indoctrination were other important parts of the political program.

In the all-important economic field, *Sąjūdis* advocated an equally comprehensive program. It sought complete self-management for the republic and demanded that Lithuania participate in the all-Union economic system as a distinct economic unit. It advocated Lithuania's control over its economic resources, finances, and currency. *Sąjūdis* also promoted "pluralistic" ownership, which meant that it sought legalization of private ownership. *Sąjūdis* also advocated the idea of direct relations with foreign enterprises and economic institutions. Finally, *Sąjūdis* exhibited acute concern for the state of the Lithuanian environment. *Sąjūdis* contended that the central government in Moscow ought to help clean up Lithuania's environment by compensating the republic for ecological damage previously inflicted by its policies.

Sąjūdis was formally legalized on March 16, 1989.

The Lithuanian Freedom League. The other organization that has moved the process of change, although its influence has been of a less direct nature, is the Lithuanian Freedom League (*Lietuvos Laisvės Lyga*). It has visibly affected the interplay between *Sąjūdis* and the CPL. The League (LFL for short) was born in the underground. First mentioned in 1978, for a decade the League was not heard of. Even its existence was questioned. Its members reemerged in 1987, the first among civic groups to test the credibility of *glasnost'* and democratization. On August 23, 1987, the League's members sponsored the commemoration of the anniversary of the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, a public demonstration that shocked Griškevičius's conservative leadership. The League also provoked Songaila's regime into giving official approval for public discussion of Stalin's purges, deportations and crimes by staging—without a permit—a demonstration in remembrance of the May 1948 deportations from Lithuania. This gathering—although drowned out by loudspeakers playing music and dispersed by police—nevertheless took place on May 22, 1988.

The League's goals have not changed since the days of its underground activities. As its information bulletin states, these goals are, first, to raise Lithuanian national consciousness and, second, to promote uncompromisingly the idea of independence.[29] In the underground, the League published *samizdat,* registered violations of human rights, and organized protests against Soviet policies. Above ground, it united with six other groups into the Association for Lithuania's Independence (*Lietuvos Nepriklausomybės Sąjunga*) and, as indicated, has been rather conspicuous in the public eye. The other members of the Association are the following small groups: The Movement for Lithuanian's Independence, the Lithuanian Democratic Party, the Christian Democratic Party, the Lithuanian Helsinki Group, the Lithuanian National Youth Association, and the Committee for the Rescue of Political Prisoners. The League subscribes to the principles of *glasnost'* and democratization, and it supports most of the program of *Sąjūdis*. However, the League has differed with *Sąjūdis*'s early interpretation of "sovereignty." The League has consistently advocated full independence, by which it means Lithuanian control not only of domestic but also of foreign and defense policies.

In contrast to *Sąjūdis*, whose supporters are distinguished party and non-party intellectuals, the League is led by former political prisoners and former partisans of the 1944–52 period. Some Catholic clergymen are also active in its leadership. Its core support comes from former dissidents, political prisoners, partisans, and deportees.

The League's main achievement has been to radicalize *Sąjūdis* and even certain elements in the CPL. The League's goal of complete independence has been virtually embraced by *Sąjūdis* and finds support among some party leaders. However, *Sąjūdis* has disapproved of the League's confrontational tactics, which the League's dissident leaders have favored as a result of their decades-long struggles with Communist authorities. Nevertheless, 38 percent of *Sąjūdis*'s Diet favored close cooperation with the League, while 49 percent supported cooperation only if the League changed its tactics.[30]

[28]Ibid.

[29]*Lietuvos Laisvės Lyga* (Vilnius), No. 1, Nov. 10, 1988, pp. 1 ff.

[30]Press release of April 7, 1989. by Lithuanian Information Center, New York.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Vienybė-Yedinstvo-Jedność. Although smaller minorities—the Jews, Belorussians, Tartars, Karaims, and others—generally supported reforms as advocated by *Sąjūdis,* the Russians and the Poles—with exceptions, of course—made alternative policy proposals on some burning issues, such as having Lithuanian be the official language of the republic.

The massive and emotional currents of national rebirth intimidated these minorities and led, after the founding congress of *Sąjūdis,* to the establishment of *Vienybė-Yedinstvo-Jedność* (Unity), an "informal" organization supposedly open to all nationalities but actually composed mostly of Russians and Poles. The avowed purpose of *Yedinstvo* was to articulate and defend the interests of the Russian and Polish minorities. At first, *Sovetskaya Litva* and *Czerwony Sztandar*—the Russian and Polish dailies published in Vilnius—served as forums for this unlikely Russian-Polish coalition.

On November 11, 1988, the republic's press published a declaration adopted at the new group's founding meeting that explained its objectives.[31] The program of *Yedinstvo* was orthodox in comparison to that advocated by *Sąjūdis*. It came out in clear support of the CPL's leading role, professed loyalty to *perestroyka* as defined by the CPSU leadership, favored the "mutual enrichment" of national cultures, and opposed discrimination on the basis of national background. In its only concrete policy proposal, *Yedinstvo* strongly objected to the adoption of Lithuanian as the official language of the republic.

Yedinstvo representatives attribute the rise of their opposition to *Sąjūdis*'s insensitivity to Russian and Polish needs. In fact, *Sąjūdis* has made mistakes, but its declarations have been liberal in attitude toward minorities. Most of Lithuania's Russians and Poles are working-class people who feel intimidated by the sea of Lithuanian flags and other symbols of national awakening. In addition, the Russians are mainly immigrants and therefore feel insecure. Russians and Poles must feel threatened by a language decree requiring all state employees to learn Lithuanian in two years. Many Russians have never gained or intended to gain proficiency in Lithuanian, although they intended to live permanently in the republic. Neither group willingly accepts minority status despite the fact that in Lithuania they are indeed minorities.

In a public demonstration on February 12, 1989, which took place in Vilnius and was attended by a crowd estimated at 80,000, *Yedinstvo* threatened workers' strikes and refusal to pay CPL membership dues if the decree on Lithuanian language, which was passed on November 19, 1988, was not rescinded in two weeks.[32] Other demands voiced at various meetings, which attracted thousands, included a proposal that people of all nationalities have a right to use their native language in all government, economic, social, and political establishments, that students in special and higher educational institutions be taught in their native languages, and that autonomous territories be established for each minority nationality.

Associations of smaller nationalities, namely, the Lithuanian Jewish Cultural Association, the Jewish Association "Tkuma," Belorussian "Syabryna," Tartar, Latvian, Estonian, Mordvinian, Karaim, and German societies, and the Ukrainian Community of Lithuania denounced the February 12 meeting as the embodiment of "Great Russian chauvinism" and *Yedinstvo* itself as a negative organization that opposed efforts by all of Lithuania's nationalities to restrain "the pretentious monopolistic claims" of the center (Moscow). The statement of these national groups supported the implementation of the decree making Lithuanian the official language.[33]

In its founding conference of May 13–14, 1989, extremists from the city of Vilnius led by Valeriy Ivanov, an official of the *Znaniye* society, captured *Yedinstvo*. As a result, the organization split, many delegates walked out, and two dozen leading figures, including some founding members, withdrew from the organization altogether, denouncing the conference as an "example of how extremism endangers democracy."[34]

In February, impressed by the ability of *Yedinstvo* to stage a demonstration with 80,000 participants, Lithuanian authorities had promised that it would be consulted and given the opportunity to influence the drafting of legislation that was to implement the language law.[35] The group's split in May has, however, considerably reduced its ability to influence political change in Lithuania. Time will tell whether it can recover.

It should be stressed that the case of Lithuania's Polish minority is different from that of its Russian minority. In May, a separate association of Lithuania's Poles was established. A lively dialogue developed between the Polish minority representatives, on the one hand, and republic authorities and *Sąjūdis*, on the other. In Warsaw, on June 26, 1989, Lithuanian party chief Algirdas Brazauskas and Polish party leader Wojciech Jaruzelski signed an agreement committing the Lithuanian

[31] *Tiesa*, Nov. 11, 1988.

[32] Ibid., Feb. 14, 1989.

[33] See *Gimtasis Kraštas*, Mar. 30–Apr. 5, 1989, p. 7.

[34] *Tiesa*, May 18, 1989; see also *Sovetskaya Litva* (Vilnius), May 16, 1989.

[35] *Tiesa*, Feb. 14, 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and Polish communist parties to extensive cooperation, including numerous exchanges, which will presumably profit Lithuania's Polish minority.[36] On July 10, 1989, Lithuania's Supreme Soviet appealed to the Poles, asking them to withdraw legislation passed in some districts of Vilnius region declaring Polish autonomy.[37] A law on minority rights is in preparation. However, *Yedinstvo* leader Ivanov, who wants Moscow to transfer administration of Vilnius to the Russian Republic, continues to claim that *Yedinstvo* represents the Poles.

The Catholic Church. Among societal institutions that have influenced political change, it is necessary to include the Catholic Church. Under the Soviet regime, the Church—once a powerful institution in Lithuanian society—found itself separated from public life, with its adherents physically persecuted. Some of the bishops were shot; others, together with one-third of the clergy, were deported to labor camps. Preparation of new clergymen was severely limited, and the religious press was banned. State-sponsored atheistic propaganda conveyed through schools, the media, and public institutions further undermined the Church's influence. Practicing believers faced discrimination in public and professional life.[38]

But the Church stayed close to the people, identified itself with the population's spiritual, social, and cultural needs, and thereby survived. It also warranted respect as Lithuania's only surviving national institution and has served as a trustee for national traditions. During the Brezhnev era, Catholic churchmen nurtured a civil rights movement, undertook petition drives, and produced *samizdat* publications. According to Jonas Mikelinskas, a distinguished writer, of all Lithuanian institutions, the Catholic church was the "most consistent and persevering laborer for society's democratization, for human dignity and spirituality."[39] In some ways, indeed, it prepared the ground for the current social, national, and even political renewal. The Church came out of the ordeal of almost half a century of suppression strong enough to command attention. Both *Sąjūdis* and the CPL have vied for its support.

The Church's attitude toward *Sąjūdis* and the process of national renewal and political change was unclear; in the early summer of 1988 it was not participating in the reform movement. But its absence did not last long. *Sąjūdis* reserved a number of seats for clergymen at its founding meeting on October 22–23, 1988. Festive occasions sponsored by the reform movement do not occur without a Mass or a benediction.

The CPL leadership itself began periodic meetings with church hierarchy representatives in late 1987. Since that time, the regime has made several concessions to the Church, thereby hoping to win Church support for its own program of *perestroyka*.

The Church's general attitude toward social and political change in Lithuania was outlined by Reverend Vaclovas Aliulis, chairman of the Church's Liturgical Commission, at the founding congress of *Sąjūdis*.[40] He said that the Catholic bishops supported the main objectives of *Sąjūdis* on questions of human and civil rights, social justice, education for national awareness, culture, ecology, and economic development. The bishops believed that the nation itself, without outside interference, should choose its political system. They sought regime recognition of ecclesiastical self-government according to canon law. The bishops further suggested the abolition of the Council on Religious Affairs—an instrument used to control the churches—whose functions, in their view, violated the principle of separation of church and state.

The Church insists on the same right to propagate its beliefs that the atheist government has in propagating its world view. The bishops also support children's access to religious instruction and education. Finally, they advocate the creation of private schools and suggest that the principle of separation of church from school, now embedded in constitutional law, ought not to apply to private educational institutions.

Reformers both outside and inside the CPL have received the Church's support. However, the Church does not directly participate in politics. *Sąjūdis* generally supports the rights of the Church and its appropriate place in society, but President Landsbergis stresses that in contrast to Poland, the Lithuanian reform movement did not develop around the Church; instead, he argues, the Church came to the movement.[41]

The Drama

Following the establishment of the initiative group of *Sąjūdis* on June 3, 1988, Lithuania's social and political life became extremely active and intense.[42] Intellectuals and professionals had broken the ice for a wide

[36]Ibid., July 2, 1989.
[37]Ibid., July 11, 1989.
[38]See Vardys, *The Catholic Church . . .*, pp. 89–127.
[39]*Gimtasis Kraštas*, May 11–17, 1989, p. 4.
[40]*Atgimimas*, No. 8, Nov. 22, 1988, p. 8, and No. 9, Nov. 29, 1988, p. 4.
[41]*Tygodnik Powszechny*, Feb. 5, 1989, p. 5.
[42]Justas Paleckis, former Soviet diplomat and current CPL Central Committee division chief for ideology, in *Komjaunimo Tiesa*, May 19, 1989, p. 4.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

range of discussions, meetings, demonstrations, ecological marches, Lithuanian language festivals, and planned and unplanned rock music festivals. New associations and publications appeared with a vengence. But the political stage was dominated by the struggle for influence over policymaking between *Sąjūdis* and the CPL.

Sąjūdis did not have a formal role in the system. It functioned as an "informal" organization, but quickly was accorded legitimacy by the Lithuanian people. The movement became powerful by virtue of the public support it could mobilize for its purposes. In the age of *glasnost'* and reform, the CPL could not disregard such power.

The struggle for influence, however, differed from competition for power in Western systems. Two factors account for the differences. First, although *Sąjūdis* had the allegiance of the people and relied on private donations for support, the CPL had control over the media, law enforcement agencies, and significant financial resources. Second, both *Sąjūdis* and especially the CPL had to take an outside player into account, namely the CPSU leadership—Moscow's approval was needed for whatever policies were hammered out in the competition between the two groups. The CPSU leadership had its own ways of participating in the process, and ultimately it alone could ratify the results of the competition. In other words, *Sąjūdis* and the CPL could not themselves decide the final outcome of their contest. The CPL's position was further complicated and weakened by the fact that many of its own most distinguished intellectuals, artists, writers, and professionals had actively joined the "other" side. On the one hand, this circumstance indicated a party split and weakened the ruling group. On the other hand, it also facilitated control and influence of *Sąjūdis* and the building of a consensus without an apparent loss of face. Indeed relations between the Movement and the CPL reflected both a struggle for power and a process of consensus-building.

One can distinguish several periods in this relationship. Once *Sąjūdis* was founded, it attempted to marshal its forces. In turn, the CPL attempted to contain *Sąjūdis*'s influence, if not to win control over it. Thereafter, both forces moved toward accepting for Lithuania the federalist model developed in Estonia. After the CPL, under pressure from the CPSU, derailed that effort, bitterness, disappointment, and conflict followed, which radicalized *Sąjūdis* and spelled defeat for the CPL. After elections to the Congress of People's Deputies in March 1989, cooperation reemerged as reflected in a mutual desire to embrace the Estonian model and then proceed toward independence.

Sąjūdis Gathers Strength

Sąjūdis used the summer of 1988 to establish a strong base of popular support, reaching out to the masses and providing an umbrella for diverse points of view. It relied on mass meetings, demonstrations, and public events—all announced by word of mouth—to spread the message. Meetings were held to discuss such burning issues of the day as justice for those who had been deported and maltreated by the authorities, elimination of pollution and ecological dangers to health and safety, the question of "sovereignty," the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939, the status of the Lithuanian language, economic independence, the restoration of normal relations with the Catholic Church, the correction of abuses and mistreatment of Lithuanian recruits in the armed forces, and the release of political prisoners. Equally important was the search for the historical truth about deportations, the partisan war, collectivization, and Lithuania's occupation and annexation in 1940. These public meetings became occasions for venting anger, and expressing the pent-up emotions accumulated through five decades of oppressive Soviet rule.

On June 24, *Sąjūdis* called an open "send-off" meeting—attended by 50,000 people—with Lithuanian party delegates elected to the 19th CPSU Conference. At the demonstration, the speakers voiced dissatisfaction with the secret elections of the delegates by a plenum of the CPL's Central Committee. *Sąjūdis* also released a statement that resembled the CPSU's understanding of *perestroyka* and demonstrated early programmatic restraint. The group endorsed the ideas of the 27th Congress of the CPSU and suggested that the 19th Party Conference decide how to ensure actual rule by the soviets (the government), as distinguished from the party, and how to restore republic sovereignty in accordance with the Leninist "concept of the nature of the Soviet Union." *Sąjūdis* also called upon the conference to "secure guarantees" for the democratization of the party and the government, approve policies for the protection of the environment, establish republic citizenship, regulate immigration into the republic, declare Lithuanian the official language of the republic, guarantee autonomous development of republic education and culture, reestablish constitutional courts at the all-Union and republic levels, and ensure opportunities for "direct" republic relations with foreign countries.[43] When calling for reforms, *Sąjūdis* formulated its suggestions

[43]Text in *Gimtasis Kraštas*, June 16–22, 1988, p. 3.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with reference to party policies and used a generally accepted phraseology for that purpose.

Encouraged by the success of the June 24 meeting, *Sąjūdis* organized a "reception" for the delegates returning from the party conference in Moscow. This meeting—on July 9—attracted 100,000 people. More flags and patriotic speeches were made.

The apex of mass demonstrations was reached on August 23 at the Vingis Park in Vilnius, where an estimated 250,000 people attended a public meeting to commemorate and discuss the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. These numbers exceeded all expectations. The meeting featured a taped speech by independent Lithuania's last foreign minister, Juozas Urbšys, who was still alive in Kaunas but too frail to attend. He negotiated with Stalin and Molotov in 1939 and told the story of the imposition of Soviet rule on Lithuania. The gathering soundly denounced Stalinism. One speaker said that "a religion has not yet been invented that could forgive all the crimes of Stalinism."[44] Another suggested that "if tsarism created a prison of nations, Stalinism established a 'slaughterhouse of nations'."[45]

The meeting demanded publication of the text of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact with its secret protocols, the opening of archives, the rewriting of history texts for schools, and the restoration of republic sovereignty. This last demand would ensure that Soviet laws would not be valid in Lithuania unless they were approved by the republic's Supreme Soviet or a popular referendum. The meeting also demanded rehabilitation of deportees, payment of compensation to the deportees by the republic and the all-Union government, and a release of political prisoners. The emotional occasion was significant in still another way. By organizing it, *Sąjūdis* aligned itself squarely with the dissidents who in 1979 had demanded denunciation of this pact by both the Soviet Union and Germany.

Thus, the meeting demonstrated a shift from the rather modestly stated requests of autonomy of June 24 to discussions of national self-determination implied in the exposure of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. *Sąjūdis* had shifted its priorities from the needs of *perestroyka* as defined by Moscow to the requirements of reform as defined by the Lithuanians.

In the summer of 1988, the CPL was disoriented and seemed unable to understand the needs of Lithuanian society. The CPL leadership also was leery of *Sąjūdis* and watched its spreading influence with great apprehension.[46] Only occasional voices, such as that of Brazauskas, then a Party Secretary, at the meetings on June 24 and July 9, favored concessions to patriotic sentiments, but even Brazauskas confessed to confusion when he first saw national flags flying. The party seems to have been hoping, as secretary of the Vilnius University party organization Professor Bronius Genzelis suggested, that somehow everything would pass and that it would not be necessary to resolve the emerging dilemmas.[47]

Songaila and Nikolay Mitkin, the Lithuanian first and the Russian second secretaries, apparently decided to contain and slow down *Sąjūdis* and to combat "nationalist" forces within the movement and outside of it. On June 17, *Sąjūdis*'s leaders met with Party Secretary Lionginas Šepetys, the one-time Lithuanian cultural tsar, and on June 23, they met with First Secretary Songaila. Neither meeting led to mutual understanding. The regime denied *Sąjūdis* access to all state media and failed to give its activities fair and unbiased coverage. Party and government authorities in Vilnius, Kaunas, and many provincial localities hindered *Sąjūdis*'s activities. Local party officials frequently demanded that party members who joined *Sąjūdis* resign from the CPL; in some cases, their party membership was simply terminated.

Despite the CPL's hard line, Songaila had begun to march to the beat of Gorbachev's drums: the government began a study of models for future economic self-management by the republic; plans to revise the republic's constitution to reflect this change began in May. Moreover, the program of the CPL delegates to the 19th Party Conference did not much differ from *Sąjūdis*'s program at that time. At the conference, Songaila even dared to suggest making Lithuanian the official language of the republic.

Yet, at the 19th Party Conference, although he made some concessions to the opposition in the cultural sphere, Songaila condemned informal groups that, in his words, wanted to move "outside of our political system" or to "dictate their will to party organizations." He also demanded greater party influence over their activi-

[44] *Atgimimas*, No. 1, Sept. 16, 1988, p. 15.

[45] Ibid., p. 14.

[46] In addition to those already mentioned, a number of other mass meetings were held in the summer and early fall. A series of rock music festivals sponsored by *Sąjūdis* took place in July. An ecological rally on August 2 in Kaunas that was attended by 500,000 people requested a halt to the installation of a third Chernobyl'-type nuclear reactor at the Ignalina power plant. It also demanded the expenditure of 100 million rubles on construction of a water purification plant in Kaunas. *Sąjūdis* also sponsored a new ecological group, *Žalieji* (the Greens). On September 16–17, 10,000 activists formed a human chain around Ignalina. Finally, *Sąjūdis* sponsored a boycott of dairy products to force better quality control. On these matters, see *Radio Free Europe Research*, Baltic Area Situation Report No. 10, Sept. 9, 1988, pp. 21–22, and No. 11, Oct. 5, 1988, pp. 19–21; and press release of the LIC, Sept. 19, 1988.

[47] *Tiesa*, Oct. 11, 1988.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ties.[48] At the party meeting with returning conference delegates, Songaila stressed that only those contributions that really strengthen and rejuvenate socialism were acceptable. He condemned the activities of informal groups that "undermined" socialist foundations, "incited" people, "encouraged national hostilities," and thus, distracted people from the "burning issues of the day." Songaila complained of too much *glasnost'* in some official publications, which printed "unfounded assertions of doubtful ideological value."[49] A week later, party bureaucrats explicitly criticized *Sąjūdis* for not "rebuffing" nationalists who wanted to join *Sąjūdis* activities and denounced the movement's cooperation with the Lithuanian Freedom League.

Thus, the CPL failed to understand or to accept the fact that reform and autonomy promoted from below would be undergirded by Lithuanian nationalism. After all, for 50 years the CPL had combatted Lithuanian nationalism. Furthermore, *Sąjūdis* challenged the party's vanguard role. The regime bureaucrats knew reform was inevitable, but they alone wanted to decide its pace. Unused to public pressures, they did not know how to react to *Sąjūdis*'s initiatives and to the emergence of large public manifestations of Lithuanian nationalism. Revelations engendered by *glasnost'* had cost the CPL credibility, prestige, and deference.

Moscow soon became concerned with the developments in the republic. On August 11–13, Aleksandr Yakovlev, Gorbachev's closest ally in the Politburo, visited Vilnius to sort out the situation. He arrived from Riga where he had conducted talks with Latvian leaders. However, Yakovlev did not give comfort to the Lithuanian party leadership. He strongly supported *glasnost'*, insisting that eventually everything would have to be revealed one way or another. He also prodded the CPL leadership to become more active in directing change, to avoid confrontation, and to harness the "national factor" as a force for reform.[50] This last admonition required the CPL's co-optation of national traditions.

Yakovlev's visit led Lithuanian party leaders to satisfy several national demands. On August 18, the old national flag and anthem gained co-equal status with state (communist) symbols.[51] On August 20, the government published a decree that established Lithuanian geography and history as separate instructional subjects in schools, stipulated that pre-school children would be taught in their native language, that teaching of Russian would not begin until the third grade, and that teachers of Lithuanian in Russian schools would receive the same 15 percent salary bonus that teachers of Russian in Lithuanian schools have been receiving for years.[52] These moves reversed the Russification of education begun after the Communist takeover. Chairman of the Council of Ministers Vytautas Sakalauskas also announced that the Lithuanian government had ended financial support for the installation of the third nuclear reactor at the Ignalina nuclear plant and stopped further construction until questions of safety could be satisfactorily answered. This act in defiance of the central ministries was unprecedented. Furthermore, Second Secretary Nikolay Mitkin publicly stated that CPL members could remain in *Sąjūdis*, inasmuch as the latter was not an opposition party. He also permitted non-party members to participate in party meetings.[53] It also seems that Yakovlev's visit, as well as a public boycott of the newspaper, spelled the dismissal of Albertas Laurinčiukas (a former TASS correspondent and author of an anti-American play) as editor-in-chief of *Tiesa*. *Sąjūdis* had targeted him and his staff for his newspaper's biased reporting of *Sąjūdis* activities. Finally, after Yakovlev's visit, the CPL allowed television coverage of some of *Sąjūdis*'s activities. Thus, Lithuanian television broadcast a program summarizing the demonstration of August 23, which commemorated the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939. Although the program was considered biased and distorted by many, at least the television silence regarding *Sąjūdis* was broken.

To clear the air and discuss such issues as political prisoners, *glasnost'*, and the activities of the KGB, the leaders of *Sąjūdis* met with the chairman of the Lithuanian KGB, Eduardas Eismuntas, on August 30. According to Eismuntas, the three-hour meeting helped to produce "more mutual confidence" but, he said, "in many circles the Movement is [still] viewed with suspicion." He expected *Sąjūdis* to "mature," but advised it to acknowledge publicly the party's primacy and its own merely auxiliary role. Eismuntas emphasized that *Sąjūdis* should stress cooperation with the party and demonstrate that cooperation by using not only "national" (Lithuanian) but also "state" flags and symbols. It should also reject "carriers of infection." Eismuntas could not understand why *Sąjūdis* "closely collaborated" with the Lithuanian Freedom League and other organizations of "anti-Soviet disposition." Eismuntas also thought that *Sąjūdis* should recruit more non-Lithuanians into its ranks and leadership.[54]

[48]Ibid., July 2, 1988.
[49]Ibid., July 9, 1988.
[50]Secretary Nikolay Mitkin, ibid., Aug. 23, 1988.
[51]Ibid., Aug. 18, 1988.
[52]Ibid., Aug. 20, 1988.
[53]Ibid., Aug. 23, 1988.
[54]*Sąjūdžio Žinios*, No. 33, Sept. 5, 1988; *Tiesa*, Sept. 16, 1988.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The meeting with Eismuntas indicated that the CPL had not withdrawn its objections to the "national" aspects of the movement's activity. Indeed, the armistice between *Sąjūdis* and the party leadership did not continue for long. On September 14, the CPL Bureau delivered a blistering attack on the organization, arguing, among other things, that *Sąjūdis* did not represent the entire population of Lithuania, was "mono-national," cooperated with "extremists who openly propagate separatist sentiments," and that some of its adherents maintained contact with "Western radio 'voices' and with the reactionary part of Lithuanian emigration."[55]

Sąjūdis had no equivalent forum for response, but in its bulletin, the prominent lawyer and *Sąjūdis* leader Kazimieras Motieka who had resigned from the party, dryly noted that the "republic's party leadership is upset that the Movement fights for *perestroyka* much more actively and decently" than did the CPL.[56]

Songaila's and Mitkin's preoccupation with the defense of the prerogatives of the party apparatus and with the hunt for "nationalists" in *Sąjūdis* and society very shortly backfired on the party and even derailed their own personal careers.

On September 28, the irrepressible Lithuanian Freedom League organized a meeting in Vilnius to mark the anniversary of the day on which Hitler "traded" Lithuania to the Soviet sphere of influence in 1939. The League had asked the administration of the city of Vilnius for a permit to hold the meeting, but the permit was refused on the grounds that the League was an "anti-Soviet" organization. Despite the prohibition, 10,000 people gathered in Gediminas Square, but as soon as Antanas Terleckas, one of the leaders of the LFL began to speak, about 500 riot police and troops from the Ministry of the Interior, wearing helmets and plexiglass shields, charged the crowd and began forcibly to disperse it. The police attacked the crowd four times in 20 minutes. The crowd formed a column and marched to the shrine of Our Lady of the Dawn; then most of the column returned to the square, where another violent confrontation broke out between police and demonstrators. The police struck with rubber truncheons; the demonstrators replied with stones and bricks. A number of demonstrators were beaten up; some policemen also were hurt. Ten demonstrators were injured, and 25 were arrested.[57]

The violent police action greatly angered the public. The incident, after a summer of very peaceful gatherings, became a scandal. Songaila received the blame because police could not have been used against the demonstrators without his approval. *Sąjūdis* demanded an investigation, and on September 29, demonstrated in front of the Central Committee building. At the 13th plenum of the Central Committee convened on October 4, Professor Bronius Genzelis, secretary of the Vilnius University party organization, declared that responsibility for the incident lay not only with LFL leader Terleckas, but "most of all [with] our Central Committee. It is slowly losing the people's confidence; it is responsible because it does not attempt to understand the process of development in our country." Genzelis ended his speech by suggesting that First Secretary Songaila "think over whether he is capable of leading the republic's party organization."[58]

The CPL daily *Tiesa* did not report Genzelis's implied suggestion that Songaila resign, but by October 20, Lithuania had a new first secretary. Algirdas Brazauskas, a long-time secretary for industrial affairs, was chosen to lead the party at the Central Committee plenum on October 20. Secretary Nikolay Mitkin was apparently eased out somewhat later, to be succeeded eventually by Vladimir Berezov, a Russian with Lithuanian roots, whose father had served as director of a Lithuanian vocational school in the interwar period. At the massive farewell meeting of May 20, 1989, for the departure of Lithuania's deputies to the Congress of People's Deputies, Berezov said that he would not be "Moscow's *Gauleiter*" (regional governor in Nazi Germany, meaning henchman) in Lithuania.

The Honeymoon Period

The founding Congress of *Sąjūdis* on October 22–23, 1988, was held under the sign of peace with the CPL. The gathering was a massive, festive occasion telecast live on the Lithuanian television network. Radio provided a simultaneous translation for the non–Lithuanian-speaking population.[59] The emotionalism of the congress itself was heightened by a torch parade held at night, and by a Catholic Mass, celebrated in front of the cathedral at Gediminas Square, and attended by thousands of non-delegates. Never before under Soviet rule had such a religious event been allowed in public; neither had such an event ever been televised.

The congress adopted over two dozen resolutions

[55] *Tiesa*, Sept. 14, 1988.
[56] *Sąjūdžio Žinios*, No. 39, Sept. 20, 1988, p. 2.
[57] Saulius Girnius, "Police Disperse Demonstration," RFE-RL, *Radio Free Europe Research*, Baltic Area Situation Report, No. 11, Oct. 5, 1988, pp. 23–25; *The Chicago Tribune*, Sept. 29, 1988; *Tiesa*, Oct. 1, 1988.
[58] *Tiesa*, Oct. 11, 1988; *Atgimimas*, No. 3, Oct. 15, 1988, p. 3.
[59] *Tiesa*, Oct. 21, 1988.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that addressed a wide range of issues, from demands for the republic's sovereignty, to a request for help for Arturas Sakalauskas, a Lithuanian soldier whose maltreatment by the Soviet Army had become a national cause célèbre and a subject of a documentary produced by a Leningrad film studio.

The CPL was prepared for this gathering. In Algirdas Brazauskas, it had a party leader committed to *perestroyka.* A respected man and political moderate, Brazauskas was known as a defender of the republic's interests and was received enthusiastically by the congress. In his speech to the Congress, Brazauskas revealed that three days previously, that is, before his appointment as first secretary was announced, he had seen Gorbachev. Brazauskas reported that the General Secretary sent greetings to the Lithuanian people and that he considered *Sąjūdis* a "positive" force for *perestroyka.* The party leader opined that a single party system has room for societal associations. He admitted that the LCP had made mistakes concerning the *Sąjūdis,* but that a "more objective" evaluation had emerged in the last two Central Committee plenums. In appealing to the congress, he asserted that "on matters of principle we think alike."[60] Therefore, the CPL and *Sąjūdis* should be able to cooperate. Brazauskas urged discussions.

Brazauskas reminded his audience how far the CPL already had gone to meet the public's demands as expressed by *Sąjūdis.* The use of traditional national symbols had already been authorized, but in a more substantive move, on October 21—a day before the congress convened—the Presidium of the republic's Supreme Soviet passed a decree that rehabilitated all, not just some, deportees from 1941–52 and ordered compensation for "economic damages" inflicted upon them at the time.[61] Moreover, in a press conference with foreign and Soviet journalists held on the eve of the congress, Brazauskas praised the Church's contribution to *perestroyka,* and Lionginas Šepetys announced that St. Casimir church in Vilnius, which had been converted into a museum of atheism, was to be returned to religious use and proposed that the Vilnius cathedral—which had been transformed into an art museum—be shared by the government and the Church.[62] (During the congress, however, because Cardinal Sladkevičius did not like that idea, an announcement was made that the cathedral would be returned to the Church.) Brazauskas also promised reconstruction of the monument of three crosses that towered over Vilnius until 1951, when it was dynamited. The monument was erected in 1916 to commemorate the early Christian martyrs in Lithuania. The promise pleased the Lithuanian as well as the Polish population. It was fulfilled in June 1989.

The party's moves were well-received, although because they came late, the CPL did not get much credit for this welcome shift of policy. The credit, by and large, went to *Sąjūdis,* which had requested such changes. Yet, *Sąjūdis* and the party seemed to share similar political views on a number of important issues, namely, the desirability of economic autonomy, revision of the republic's constitution, and some aspects of the new national electoral law.

However, the euphoria and the era of good feeling the congress had generated lasted no longer than six weeks. Disagreement emerged over the concept of sovereignty and, more specifically, over the tactics to achieve it. Ultimately, the rupture was caused by the Kremlin. A brief review of the proposals for economic autonomy and the proposals for changes in the constitution will help to elucidate the new conflict.

On October 5, *Tiesa* published the "principles" for the organization of the republic's economic self-government. These principles had been agreed on September 21–23 at a meeting in Riga of the chiefs of state planning agencies and the economists of the academies of sciences of all three Baltic republics.[63] The document was a result of inputs by economists close to all the Baltic popular fronts as well as by official government agencies. The Baltic statement also addressed the issues of sovereignty and federalism, thus affecting the newly drafted revision of the Lithuanian constitution (on this last point, see below).

The Baltic model radically differed from Moscow's basic requirements for revised economic management in the republics. The Balts proposed—contrary to all-Union provisions—that the title to all land, mineral resources, outer shelf, forests, and space in their territory belong to the republics. Management, regulation, and use of these resources were to be decided by republic supreme soviets, not by Moscow.[64] Banks, enterprises, transportation, energy industries, and communications networks were no longer to be subordinated to central management. The government in Moscow, according to this model, would manage only defense industries, which would be run on the basis of long-term contracts between the republic governments and the all-Union government.

[60] Ibid., Oct. 23, 1988.
[61] Ibid., Oct. 22, 1988.
[62] Ibid.

[63] *Atgimimas,* No. 2, Oct. 10, 1988, p. 13.
[64] *Tiesa,* Oct. 5, 1988.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The central government in Moscow was to have only delegated powers, which would cover defense and foreign relations. Certain deductions would be made from republic budgets to finance their operation. The republics would also share in the financing of other programs common to the entire country or to several republics.

Republic jurisdiction would extend to all local government and to questions of economic management. Such jurisdiction would cover economic policies; republic and local budgeting; social, economic and demographic development; taxation; prices; wages; and incentives. Republics further would have the power to control banks and circulation of money, to establish currency, and to set rates of exchange. The ruble would still be acceptable as common currency in the all-Union market. Republics would independently decide all questions of international economic activity.

These "principles" were endorsed by the *Sąjūdis* congress. They also enjoyed the party's support because the chairman of the state planning committee obviously could not have signed the Riga agreement without the CPL's sanction.

In addition to the document outlining the principles of desired economic organization, *Sąjūdis* and the party also had to consider a draft of a new Lithuanian constitution. This draft was prepared by a group of scholars under the sponsorship of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences for the purpose of establishing a legal framework for the new economic model and to reflect changes necessitated by *perestroyka* in the political, social, and cultural spheres. The first draft was completed on September 21; a second, amended, draft was approved by the Diet of *Sąjūdis* on November 13.[65] These two drafts contained some interesting differences; for example, only the second draft mentioned the party at all, although not in a "vanguard" role. The second draft also assumed the existence of private schools that would not be bound by the legal separation of church and school.

On the question of sovereignty, the second draft was more precise and direct. The legal basis of relations with Moscow's central government and with republics would be contractual. Defense, foreign affairs, and all-Union budgets would belong to a "mixed" jurisdiction; delegation of these functions could be withdrawn from the center "if the activities of the USSR organs contradicted the interests of the Lithuanian SSR." Lithuania would have the right to secede. Article 70 provided that Soviet laws would be valid only if they did not "contradict the constitution of the Lithuanian SSR." This draft was submitted to the Supreme Soviet of the republic with an expectation that it would be considered at its November 17 meeting.

Finally, yet another item of immediate importance was Gorbachev's proposed amendments to the USSR constitution and the draft of the new electoral law. The *Sąjūdis* Diet resolved, on November 13, that these amendments were "undemocratic and contrary to the spirit of the 19th Party Conference" and therefore ought to be rejected. Similarly, *Sąjūdis* argued that the electoral law was an "undemocratic" document, because it did not "guarantee equal voting rights to people nor equal representation of republics but instead strengthens the bureaucratic system of governance."[66] *Sąjūdis* held that the highest representative institution in the USSR ought to be composed of an equal number of deputies from each union republic, elected by universal and direct suffrage.

This strong criticism represented the culmination of furious efforts by *Sąjūdis* to persuade Gorbachev that it was imperative to postpone consideration of his proposals. On November 2, *Sąjūdis* sent Gorbachev a telegram asking postponement. On November 8, representatives of all three Baltic popular fronts met in Riga where they articulated opposition to the constitutional amendments, defined the legal guarantees needed for economic autonomy, and decided to appeal to the people to sign a massive petition to the Kremlin. On this occasion, the three movements restated their support for genuine sovereignty and a federal structure for the Soviet Union as a whole.[67]

On November 9, *Sąjūdis* leaders met with First Secretary Brazauskas and other top republican officials. It seems that these officials did not advocate an outright rejection of the amendments but rather a postponement of their consideration. That evening on television, *Sąjūdis* speakers appealed for signatures to a petition demanding that the consideration of the proposed amendments be postponed. The appeal was made after reading and discussing the declaration agreed in Riga. Within a week, *Sąjūdis* collected 1.8 million signatures. As Jonas Mikelinskas later said, this petition was really a popular referendum on the question of independence from Moscow.[68] Some 75 percent of the republic's adult population supported postponement.

Party leader Brazauskas and most of his colleagues supported economic autonomy and shared many of

[65]Text of the first draft in *Atgimimas*, No. 2, Oct. 10, 1988, pp. 7–12; second draft in ibid., No. 7, Nov. 15, 1988, pp. 2–6.

[66]See *Atgimimas*, , No. 7, Nov. 15, 1988, p. 6.

[67]Ibid., No. 6, Nov. 11, 1988, p. 5.

[68]*Literatūra ir Menas*, June 17, 1989, p. 2.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sąjūdis's criticisms of Moscow's constitutional amendments and the proposed electoral law. In the presence of CPSU Politburo member Nikolay Slyun'kov, Brazauskas blamed the republic's increasing economic difficulties on the central ministries and insisted that only the economic independence of the republic could facilitate economic recovery.[69] Brazauskas also agreed with *Sąjūdis* that Gorbachev's proposed amendments betrayed "a tendency to seek further centralization of government and management" and suggested that their adoption would create additional difficulties for the promised expansion of union-republic rights. He called the new centralism "impermissible."

Brazauskas also criticized the electoral system.[70] Like the *Sąjūdis* leaders, he suggested that the announced procedures and rules would "practically" eliminate direct and secret elections. He thought it regrettable and unfair that the republic's representation in the Council of Nationalities in the USSR Supreme Soviet would be reduced to seven. Brazauskas criticized as well the rules governing election of delegates to the Congress of People's Deputies from social organizations. He wanted to know why only organizations of all-Union status were allowed to elect delegates from the republics (via their branches in the republics), and not those headquartered in the republics.

Rupture of Consensus

The CPL's support for the revision of Lithuania's constitution must have been very fragile because it quickly crumbled under pressure from Moscow. As noted earlier, the Kremlin had become concerned with Baltic developments in the summer of 1988. Moscow's anxieties sharply increased after the Riga agreement of September 21–22 on the principles of Baltic economic autonomy. Although Gorbachev averred that the Lithuanian developments were a "normal" part of the *perestroyka* process,[71] organized opposition to Gorbachev's constitutional amendments, it seems, alarmed the Kremlin.

Two days after the beginning of the campaign for the petition to postpone consideration of changes in the USSR constitution, three Politburo members arrived in Tallinn, Riga, and Vilnius, respectively, to restrain Baltic opposition. Victor Chebrikov visited Estonia; Vladimir Medvedev went to Latvia; and Nikolay Slyun'kov visited Lithuania. Slyun'kov was not as direct in Lithuania as Chebrikov was in Estonia—most likely because he found more cautious attitudes among Lithuanian party leaders—but he publicly warned against "overemphasizing" national concerns. Socialist pluralism could tolerate diversity of views only if it strengthened "socialism instead of ruining it." Renewal was possible only if reform did not weaken "the unity of republics," but reinforced it.[72]

On November 17, the Estonian Supreme Soviet adopted amendments to the republic's constitution according to which all-Union legislation would come into force in Estonia only after it had been ratified by the Estonian Supreme Soviet. Brazauskas was immediately called to Moscow to be warned against following Estonia's example. Brazauskas very likely met with the Politburo "experts" on the Baltics, namely Slyun'kov, Chebrikov, and Medvedev. Gorbachev was on a state visit to India at the time.

The Lithuanian party acceded to Moscow's demands. To be sure, at its November 18 session, Lithuania's Supreme Soviet changed Articles 77, 168, and 169 of the constitution to make Lithuanian the official language and to legalize the old flag and anthem. The legislature also counseled the USSR Supreme Soviet to postpone consideration of amendments to the all-Union constitution until republics had rewritten their own constitutions, and it criticized Gorbachev's electoral law. However, the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet refused to declare Lithuanian law sovereign.[73] The republic's Supreme Soviet did not reject outright the needed revision of the Lithuanian constitution but skirted the issue. Chairman of the Supreme Soviet Lionginas Šepetys simply refused to accept motions to revise Articles 11, 37, and 70 of the current constitution.[74]

Representatives of *Sąjūdis* who attended the session were incensed and angry. The crowd outside the Supreme Soviet building, which was waiting in a festive mood for the anticipated declaration of sovereignty, became furious after learning of the decision. Deputies emerging from the building were treated with hostility. TASS poured salt into the Lithuanian wound by reporting that the Lithuanians "rejected" the Estonian proposal. Denials by *Sąjūdis* and by republic's leaders, including Brazauskas, could not correct the distortion spread in the all-Union media. For the supporters of reforms, the Supreme Soviet's decision meant "betrayal of Estonia," a "stab in the back to Estonia," and even "treason." The decisions on the Lithuanian language, flag, and anthem were no consolation.

Brazauskas tried to repair the damage. On Novem-

[69] *Tiesa*, Nov. 16, 1988.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid., Oct. 22, 1988.
[73] Ibid., Nov. 16, 1988.
[74] See *Atgimimas*, No. 8, Nov. 22, 1988, p. 3.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ber 19, in a dramatic television speech that he reportedly had great difficulty in preparing, the First Secretary tried to explain that the adoption of provisions on legal sovereignty and precedence of Lithuanian laws would have been "confrontational," and that in actuality they would "legalize secession" and indicate a "refusal to obey USSR laws." "The road to sovereignty," he said, "is extremely complicated, enormously long, and all of our actions must come from a deeply felt sense of responsibility. Quick, thoughtless decisions would only hurt us in pursuing the main goal."[75] Brazauskas suggested that ratification of sovereignty would bring an adverse turn in "cadres policy," meaning that Moscow would send outsiders to manage Lithuanian affairs.

Brazauskas also evidently appealed to Cardinal Sladkevičius for help. The Cardinal obliged by writing a statement "to the believers" in which he expressed support for an "unstoppable" process of change. But Cardinal Sladkevičius stressed that on the road of change "of great importance will be our own determination, resolution, tenacity, and unhurried, wise steps toward ever new achievements." This statement, published on the front page of *Tiesa* on November 21, seemed to endorse Brazauskas's plea for patience.

The decision by the Supreme Soviet shattered the newly established cooperation between the CPL and *Sąjūdis*. The party acknowledged that *Sąjūdis* was not merely an auxiliary helper to the party or a lobbyist but a political competitor. "There is a contest going on," confirmed Brazauskas. "Sometimes [*Sąjūdis*] must learn to lose. We [the party], too, sometimes lose."[76]

But *Sąjūdis* did not want to lose. It reacted to defeat swiftly, loudly, and decisively. *Sąjūdis* leaders quickly turned to lobbying Supreme Soviet deputies for a special session of the legislature on November 25, before the meeting of the USSR Supreme Soviet. *Sąjūdis* gained the support of 57 deputies, but because the number was far lower than the required 117, ultimately the CPL leadership prevailed. *Sąjūdis* then blasted the leadership of the legislature for "procedural violations" that frustrated the original vote, and censured three leaders of the Supreme Soviet responsible, in its view, for manipulating these procedures: Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet Vytautas Astrauskas, Secretary Jonas Gureckas, and Chairman of the Supreme Soviet Lionginas Šepetys. Eventually, all three paid the price for their timidity. *Sąjūdis*'s Council now vowed to use its political power in various forms of "moral" protest. On November 20, in a declaration of its "moral independence," the group stated that

no political requirements of the situation can restrain the free will of Lithuania. Its will is its highest law. Only Lithuania can decide and execute its laws. Until this principle becomes a legal norm, only those laws will be respected in Lithuania that do not restrain Lithuanian independence. Disobedience to laws that violate our independence may incur juridical responsibility but they do not transgress morality.[77]

This strong reaction caused dissension within the ranks of *Sąjūdis* despite the fact that the statement of "moral independence" was adopted nearly unanimously by an expanded meeting of the governing Council. Long discussions evinced unanimity on the goal of sovereignty for Lithuania, but they also revealed disagreements over its meaning and over the tactics by which sovereignty was to be achieved. To breach the emerging schism, which was immediately exploited in the official press, the Council adopted a declaration of unity, clarified the nature of membership in *Sąjūdis*, and elected Landsbergis president.

The Council agreed that its decisions were to be unconditionally binding on its membership. This action meant that obligations emanating from membership in the party or from any other institution would not override the decisions of *Sąjūdis*.[78] Thus, from its first real political crisis, *Sąjūdis* emerged as a stronger, more united organization, ready to do battle with the party using all legal means, and persuaded that political power lies in moral strength.

On November 18, the CPL won a pyrrhic victory. Actually, while winning in the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet, it lost in the country. It proved impossible to please both Moscow and the Lithuanian people. The CPL could no longer command support from all its members. It could expect support only from veterans, other orthodox Soviet groups, and from *Yedinstvo*. But the Russo-Polish group, too, was upset because of the CPL's support for the establishment of Lithuanian as the official language of the republic.

The party, however, needed help. In November, the Supreme Soviet in Moscow approved the proposed constitutional changes and the regulations for the elections to the Congress of People's Deputies. The CPL would have to win these elections. With *Sąjūdis* now in clear opposition, winning seats in the new Congress of People's Deputies would be an extremely difficult task

[75] *Tiesa*, Nov. 20, 1988.
[76] Ibid.
[77] *Atgimimas*, No. 8, Nov. 22, 1989, p. 5.
[78] Ibid., No. 9, Nov. 29, 1988, pp. 2–3.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for the Communist Party of Lithuania.

To strengthen the party's starting position in the forthcoming electoral competition, First Secretary Brazauskas chose to continue the party's reconciliation with religious and nationalist forces. By then, virtually all political prisoners had been released. Christmas became a legal holiday. At the end of December, Commissioner for Religious Affairs Petras Anilionis informed Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius that he would be allowed to return to Vilnius to resume his duties as administrator of the diocese from which he was banished in 1961. Soon to be elevated to Archbishop by Pope John Paul, Steponavičius solemnly returned to his cathedral on February 5, 1989.[79] On the same day, the first issue of an independent Catholic magazine was allowed to appear with a print-run of 100,000 copies.

Restoration of patriotic Lithuanian traditions also continued. The Ministry of Education endorsed a project for reorganizing education into a "national school" system, philosophically different from the old ideologically oriented communist institution, i.e., one that would place greater emphasis on Lithuanian history and geography and not require instruction in Marxism-Leninism or atheism. This project, courageously explained at a Moscow conference on education, won supporters among educators from other national republics but incurred the wrath of central ministry officials in Moscow. Then, while celebrating the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the short-lived Soviet power on December 16, 1918, Brazauskas rehabilitated the "bourgeois" declaration of Lithuanian independence, which occurred on February 16, 1918, declaring—contrary to 50 years of propaganda—that it was a progressive event because it signified restoration of the tradition of Lithuanian statehood.[80] He also painted a rather favorable picture of independent Lithuania's development, emphasizing the progress achieved in education, culture, and the economy. This speech was a prelude to the declaration of February 16 as a legal holiday, which came on January 25.[81] Thus, this anniversary, whose commemoration was brutally suppressed by police in 1988, would henceforth be officially celebrated in Lithuania.[82] Ironically, the party again did not receive much credit, if any at all, for these concessions. The public suspected the CPL of seeking to co-opt religious and national traditions for its own purposes.

At the same time, the CPL also tried to limit *Sąjūdis*'s emerging power and influence. This effort also failed. Speakers at a conference of the Vilnius party organization noted a worsening in relations between the party and *Sąjūdis*.[83] Brazauskas admitted "disharmony" after the Supreme Soviet session of November 18 but urged "consolidation" of forces with *Sąjūdis* to advance republic autonomy, for which Brazauskas judged the situation in the Soviet Union to be rather "favorable."

However, although Brazauskas spoke of peace, his colleagues in the party and government followed a different course. The *Sąjūdis* bulletin *Atgimimas* announced that it was being subjected to censorship as of mid-December.[84] The state television network curtailed its cooperation with the reform movement. The government temporarily froze *Sąjūdis*'s deposits held in a bank account on grounds that not all formalities had been met. Signs also appeared that the party might decide to screen nominations at the regional level for the Congress of People's Deputies, as provided by law. Fearing that the party might use this means to eliminate opposition candidates, *Sąjūdis* warned the authorities to disregard the option Moscow had allowed. Newly appointed party Second Secretary Vladimir Berezov publicly labelled *Sąjūdis* an "opponent" and a "critic," although he considered it a "positive" factor that prodded the party and government to make better decisions. Berezov thought, however, that *Sąjūdis* lacked such qualities as *glasnost'*, democracy, and tolerance of the opinions of others.[85]

The Election Campaign

In this climate of mistrust, *Sąjūdis* and the CPL prepared for the scheduled electoral campaign. Lithuania was to elect 10 deputies from territorial-population districts, 32 from national-territorial districts and 16 from organizations. Popular electoral competition would decide the fate of 42 deputies.

Few doubted that the party's candidates would be contested by *Sąjūdis* nominees. The non-party forces, however, were not united on the question of participa-

[79] *Tiesa*, Feb. 7, 1989. Anilionis was replaced in early January as Commissioner for Religious Affairs by Kazimieras Valančius, who promised to correct mistakes made in church-state relations. Valančius said that henceforth these relations would be characterized by "constructive dialogue rather than confrontation, as in the past." See ibid., Jan. 13, 1989.

[80] Ibid., Dec. 17, 1988.

[81] Ibid., Jan. 26, 1989.

[82] Ibid., Feb. 17, 1989. The festivities took place in Kaunas and were sponsored by *Sąjūdis*. Events included a solemn Mass, rededication of the renovated Freedom Monument, and a meeting of *Sąjūdis*'s Diet. Guests from the other Baltic republics and Lithuanian diasporas abroad attended. Except for Brazauskas, regime officials were not invited.

[83] Ibid., Dec. 6, 1988.

[84] *Atgimimas*, No. 11, Dec. 16, 1988, p. 1.

[85] Ibid., No. 13, Dec. 30, 1988, p. 3.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion in elections. The Lithuanian Freedom League, the Christian Democratic Party, and the Helsinki Group attempted to persuade *Sąjūdis* to stay out of the electoral process. The League considered the elections illegal because it held that Lithuania was an occupied country and, furthermore, the League doubted the honesty of the process. In the view of LFL leaders, the party would not allow candidates other than its own to win. *Sąjūdis* rightly considered this view mistaken.

In the electoral campaign, *Sąjūdis* candidates were at a disadvantage. For the most part, the official media either did not cover their activities or did so in a most perfunctory manner. However, *Sąjūdis* candidates managed to compensate for these obstacles with hard work—meetings of voters in every town or hamlet, getting acquainted with the people, and listening to their concerns.

At first, *Sąjūdis* nominated candidates in all electoral districts against all party candidates, including against Brazauskas and Berezov. However, after the campaign heated up and it became likely that these two leaders would be defeated, *Sąjūdis* withdrew its candidates against the two party leaders. *Sąjūdis* positively evaluated both men for their views, as well as for their personal and leadership qualities. Moreover, *Sąjūdis* apparently did not want to embarrass them, lose the leading official spokesmen for the republic at the Moscow parliament, and weaken their power to negotiate with the CPSU leadership.

The party published its electoral platform in *Tiesa* on January 26. It expressed support for *perestroyka,* and opposed "anti-socialist" programs and "conservative forces." The platform promoted the plan for economic self-government starting in 1990, called for respect and mutual understanding in church-state relations, and advocated "pluralism" of opinions, democracy, and *glasnost'* founded on the "common values of mankind."

Sąjūdis could and did accept much of what the CPL sought. But *Sąjūdis* advocated private farming, regarding which the CPL hedged, and military service in national units stationed on republic territory.

The two platforms differed on the meaning of sovereignty. Interestingly, the antagonists shared the slogan "Lithuania without sovereignty is Lithuania without a future." Each side, however, understood the slogan differently. According to the party, sovereignty meant the

opportunity of independently deciding all questions of political, economic, social and cultural life; realization of the right of self-determination by the Lithuanian people; preservation of national identity. Sovereignty means an exclusive right to our land, forests, natural and cultural resources and treasures; our own constitution and the laws; citizenship; state language and freedom to maintain relations with the other Soviet republics and with foreign countries.

In its electoral platform, the party related the concept of sovereignty to the "concept of a Leninist Soviet federation." *Sąjūdis*'s views on republic sovereignty more directly espoused the idea of an independent state. "The Lithuanian nation," *Sąjūdis* said, "has an old and strong tradition of statehood that it never renounced of its own free will; it therefore has the natural and inalienable right to reestablish independent Lithuania." *Sąjūdis* contends that the Russian republic and the other Soviet republics must respect the peace treaty that Lenin signed with Lithuania on July 12, 1920, recognizing Lithuania as an independent state. *Sąjūdis* called upon the Soviet government to publish and declare null and void the Nazi-Soviet agreements of 1939 and 1940, which opened the way "for the occupation and annexation of the Lithuanian Republic." With the establishment of a sovereign Lithuania, relations with the USSR were to be regulated by treaties and Lithuanian laws were to override all-Union laws on republic territory.

This statement was further augmented by a declaration of "spiritual independence" by *Sąjūdis*'s Diet on February 16, 1989.[86] In a brief statement, the movement's leaders said that although Germany and the USSR annexed Lithuania by force and conspiracy in 1939–40, "international recognition of Lithuanian independence is still valid." *Sąjūdis* stated that its goal was "to reestablish state sovereignty, not limiting progress toward it by partial achievements." The organization based its claims on Gorbachev's speech at the United Nations on December 7, 1988, in which he was perceived to have stressed the right of national self-determination. *Sąjūdis* further advocated social justice, humanism, democracy, and cultural autonomy for Lithuania's ethnic minorities. It favored "traditional neutrality in a demilitarized zone of Europe." It also supported universally recognized human and citizenship rights that give Lithuania's citizens the right independently to choose their own form of government. Thus, *Sąjūdis*'s platform made clear that the movement strove for complete independence from the Soviet Union, although it was prepared to accept some ties to Moscow regulated by treaties.

Concerned with the fortunes of his party in the election campaign,[87] at the next CPL Central Committee

[86]Ibid., No. 7, Feb. 17, 1989, p. 1.

[87]In a special election held in January to fill vacant seats in the republic's Supreme Soviet, *Sąjūdis* candidates won in all four districts. This election gave the CPL a bitter taste of things to come.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

plenum on February 21, Brazauskas raised the question of how far *Sąjūdis* should be allowed to go. Brazauskas accused *Sąjūdis* of tiptoeing toward the policy line advocated by the Lithuanian Freedom League. He said that *Sąjūdis* had changed since June 1988. The Movement, the First Secretary charged, wants Lithuania to be involved not only in *perestroyka*, but also in "national liberation." This program raises questions, he warned, about "the prospects for further cooperation." Brazauskas cautioned that only common goals could assure cooperation and only unity could help Lithuania. Currently, "*Sąjūdis* is pushing Lithuania into ruin."[88]

The First Secretary then revealed the degree to which the party had lost control over the media, the youth, higher education, the Academy of Sciences, and even its own membership. Printing houses and the media behave as if they were not owned by the state or the party, he complained. We should stop, Brazauskas said, blackening and defaming the reputations of party leaders and the party itself, which now goes on in all the media. It is also time, Brazauskas continued, to stop excessive criticisms of the past. Laws should be passed punishing those who violate rules on meetings and demonstrations. He blamed *Sąjūdis* for ethnic polarization because it supposedly did not welcome non-Lithuanians and seemed to be incapable of dissociating itself from extremism. Brazauskas' speech was followed by others demanding similar or stronger measures to reestablish control.[89]

The plenum reflected the bitter electoral struggle between the party and *Sąjūdis*. The party's words simply did not inspire confidence. It was also burdened by responsibility for past repressive policies when it acted as both the puppet and as the hatchet man for the rulers in the Kremlin. Revelations of opposition to *Sąjūdis*, to independence, and to *glasnost'* in the Central Committee plenum further impaired the party's credibility.

Why did the party threaten to muzzle *Sąjūdis*? Juozas Kuolelis, an old *apparatchik* dismissed from his position as chairman of the Lithuanian State Television and Radio Committee, put his finger on the main reason for the party's behavior. He suggested that the electoral campaign did not favor the CPL's candidates, and therefore it was not very optimistic about its chances for electoral success.[90]

The elections took place on Easter Sunday, March 26, an unfavorable election day for non-Communist forces in a Catholic country. However, despite the holy day and the boycott by the Helsinki Group, the Lithuanian Freedom League, and the Lithuanian Democratic Party,[91] 82.5 percent of the voting population cast their ballots. The level of participation in Lithuania was a little lower than in Latvia and Estonia, but very impressive under the circumstances.

For the CPL, the election results proved disastrous. Election casualties included two Central Committee secretaries, the chairman of the republic's Council of Ministers, the chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, some ministers, district party secretaries, and the mayors of the cities of Kaunas and Vilnius.

Sąjūdis's candidates won in 36 of 42 electoral districts.[92] Because *Sąjūdis* did not contest the candidacies of Brazauskas and Berezov, the party could claim to have won only four contested electoral seats. If one adds those of its supporters who were elected by "societal" organizations, *Sąjūdis*'s total was even higher.

Sąjūdis winners included eight writers, several economists, scientists, lawyers, and professionals, and one worker. One of the movement's deputies was a Russian professional (Nikolay Medvedev), elected in a heavily Lithuanian district in Kaunas by a comfortable margin, and a Jewish writer (Yakov Kanovichus), elected in a run-off in Vilnius. The ethnic factor apparently worked for a Russian nominee of the CPL (Gennadiy Konoplev) in Vilnius and a Polish professor (Ivan Tikhonovich) of the Vilnius Pedagogical Institute, who was supported by *Yedinstvo*.

Surprisingly, the CPL took its defeat in stride. Immediately after the election, party Second Secretary Berezov explained that the party lost simply because the voters "categorically voted against the old times and the old order."[93] In discussing specifics, Berezov said that the party lost votes because it could not shake off responsibility for "old mistakes." The CPL's last Central Committee plenum also scared some voters who concluded that the old times were returning. Berezov further blamed the party's failure on its local organizations, which proved unaccustomed to seizing the initiative. Crediting the fervent commitment of *Sąjūdis* followers, the Secretary concluded that the elections

[88] *Tiesa*, Feb. 23, 1989.

[89] Ibid. For example, Kęstutis Zaleskas, first secretary of the Vilnius city party organization, denounced *Sąjūdis*'s February 16 declaration as "adventurist" and "extremist." Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet Jonas Gurleckas argued that all city and local publications produced by *Sąjūdis* should be closed down, that *Atgimimas* be allowed to remain open but be subject to censorship, that enterprises and organizations should not be allowed to make financial contributions to *Sąjūdis*, that the law governing demonstrations should finally be confirmed, and that *Sąjūdis* should be allowed to telecast only taped programs.

[90] Ibid.

[91] The last a group advocating left-of-center and nationalist policies.

[92] See the election results in *Tiesa*, Mar. 29 and Apr. 11, 1989.

[93] *Komjaunimo Tiesa*, Mar. 30, 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

were won by "those who went to the people."

Berezov was not pessimistic about the future prospects of the party. The electoral campaign, he said, drew the party's and *Sąjūdis*'s positions closer to one another. *Sąjūdis* candidates, he noted, did not propagandize "maximalist" demands. Moreover, in his view, *Sąjūdis* candidates became more realistic about the actual possibilities for implementing their election platform in Lithuania.

Reemergence of Consensus

After appraising the new situation, *Sąjūdis* and the CPL quickly began to search for a new understanding. Some newly elected deputies from *Sąjūdis* immediately asked for an appointment with Gorbachev, but settled for a session with Anatoliy Lukyanov, Gorbachev's deputy, who ostentatiously sought to impress the Lithuanians with his knowledge of Lithuanian culture and circumstances in the republic.[94] They discussed problems of misinformation about Lithuanian events in the central press, the slow action on reform in Moscow, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and the Soviet socialist model. Lukyanov was anxious to know whether *Sąjūdis* recognized the party's leading role and advised the Lithuanians to concentrate on economic problems. He suggested Moscow's principles for economic self-management as a guide for action, although *Sąjūdis* economists tried to persuade him that the application of those principles would not stimulate the economy. The Baltic model was more radical than Lukyanov was apparently willing to accept.

Probably the first public indication that a new wind had begun to blow was an announcement by the CPL's historical commission that Moscow had come to acknowledge the existence of secret protocols to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 and that the time was approaching when those protocols were going to be "denounced."[95] Shortly thereafter, the public's curiosity was aroused by an article published by Lionginas Šepetys, the chairman of the Supreme Soviet and former party secretary for propaganda, in which he asserted that if the November 18, 1988, Supreme Soviet session were held in 1989, the results would be different. He also spoke of a new status for the CPL and even of "party pluralism."[96] A week later, on May 11, First Secretary Brazauskas, together with his colleagues from Estonia and Latvia, took part in a Politburo meeting in Moscow. Brazauskas revealed that the Politburo discussed the question of economic self-management and made an evaluation of the "events of 1939–40." According to Brazauskas, Gorbachev "understood" the importance of economic autonomy. Brazauskas was certain that the Politburo would soon do more on this question.[97] The next day the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR decided to convene the 11th session of the legislature on May 18 to consider amendments to Articles 11, 31, 37, and 70 of the Lithuanian constitution. Ratification of these amendments would represent a declaration of republican sovereignty. Representatives of *Sąjūdis* actively participated in preparations for this session.[98] It seems reasonable to assume that Brazauskas discussed this matter when meeting with the CPSU Politburo in Moscow.

Thus, the party and *Sąjūdis* finally reached consensus to do what could have been accomplished on November 18. Indeed, when the Supreme Soviet met on May 18, exactly six months after rejecting the concept of sovereignty, the mood was at once solemn, happy, and expectant. The legislature easily approved the revisions of the constitutional articles, declaring that all land and resources in the republic's territory shall belong to the republic, not to the USSR; that Lithuania shall have its own form of citizenship and shall control immigration; that citizens of the Lithuanian SSR shall possess all the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the constitution, laws, and international "legal acts"; that citizens' rights shall have the protection of the courts; and finally and most important, that only laws adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR or by a referendum shall be valid in Lithuania.[99] Laws and "legal acts" adopted by the USSR would be valid only if confirmed and duly registered by the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet. The Soviet could also limit or reject such legislation. In fact, during the same session, the legislature declared invalid a decree passed on March 21, 1989, by the USSR Supreme Soviet that increased taxes on private automobiles.[100]

The Supreme Soviet adopted several other documents, the most important of which was the "declaration of Lithuanian state sovereignty." This document is a virtual proclamation of independence, and is one

[94] *Tiesa*, Apr. 11, 1989.
[95] Ibid., Apr. 21, 1989.
[96] Ibid., May 3, 1989.
[97] Ibid., May 13, 1989.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid., May 19, 1989.
[100] Ibid., May 24, 1989. At its May 18 session, the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet also snubbed Moscow by electing Jonas Sabutis, a former high official of the republic's Procuracy, to the position of secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. Sabutis had been fired from the Procuracy three months earlier for his refusal to become the "Lithuanian Vyshinskiy." (Andrey Vyshinskiy was Stalin's prosecutor in the notorious show trials of the 1930's.)

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more indication that the CPL made further concessions to *Sąjūdis*. The declaration averred that Lithuania first arose as a state in the 13th century and reestablished itself in 1918. "The restored statehood was recognized by many nations in the world," the declaration stated, "and also by Soviet Russia, which renounced all claims to the Lithuanian state and territory by a treaty signed with Lithuania in 1920."[101] However, on the basis of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 and the additional secret protocols,

the sovereign Lithuanian state in 1940 was illegally annexed by force to the Soviet Union and lost political, economic and cultural independence. The government of the USSR currently ignores even the goal of economic independence of the republic.

Thus, the only way out of this situation, the declaration continued

is by regaining state sovereignty, which today is a clearly manifested goal of the Lithuanian nation and an inalienable right of nations that can materialize only under conditions of free national self-determination. The Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR declares that from today, after amending Article 70 of the constitution of the Lithuanian SSR, the only valid laws in Lithuania are those adopted or confirmed by its Supreme Soviet. Future relations with the USSR and other states shall be established only by international agreements. These aims of the Lithuanian people are directed neither against the rights of nations nor against their legitimate interests.

Finally, the Supreme Soviet approved a law on economic self-management to which the party and *Sąjūdis* essentially had agreed in the fall of 1988. Thus, as of January 1, 1990, a new model for economic independence was to be implemented in the republic.

According to published reports, all these measures were adopted by a vast majority of delegates. Constitutional revisions apparently won unanimous agreement. Two deputies—the chief of the Lithuanian KGB and the editor of party journal *Komunistas*—voted against the Supreme Soviet's declaration of sovereignty. Three deputies abstained.[102]

The crowds outside the Supreme Soviet building waited for 14 hours for the deputies to appear. This time the deputies received greetings and flowers. A new wave of euphoria swept over the city.

Why did the Lithuanian authorities change their minds? Why did the Supreme Soviet adopt not only the constitutional amendments, but also a declaration of sovereignty that was every bit as radical as the "spiritual" declaration of independence by *Sąjūdis* on February 16? What transpired between February 16 and May 18 to change the views of Brazauskas and the rest of the republic's leadership?

Some answers can be extrapolated from contextual comments made by party or *Sąjūdis* leaders. According to Supreme Soviet Deputy Romualdas Ozolas, the authorities "had no other choice but to do what was needed by all."[103] In other words, they had to accede to the demands of the majority, which expressed its will in the March elections.

Other, more specific factors may explain the evolution in the CPL's thinking from November to May. First, the party finally faced the fact that the movement for *perestroyka* had changed into a movement for "national rebirth," whose goal was sovereignty.[104]

Second, the votes were a reaction to Moscow's indifference to Lithuania's quest for economic independence. Neither the central authorities nor most Soviet economists wanted to hear about the Lithuanian plan; neither did the central press open its pages for explanations of the plan by Lithuanian specialists.[105] The Lithuanian government addressed Moscow four times in the previous six months on this question, and it was rebuffed each time. Thus, "Lithuania was forced to take the steering wheel in its own hands."[106] Central authorities apparently felt threatened by the proposed changes, so they disputed the expected effectiveness of such reforms.

Third, some leaders foresaw a possible reemergence of "dogmatism" and assimilationist nationality policies that would again stifle the development of native culture.[107] *Perestroyka,* as pursued by Moscow, was believed to be moving too slowly to avoid setbacks. Thus, Moscow needed to be pushed, and CPL leaders believed that they had better push for independence while circumstances in Moscow favored its success. It also was noted that Estonia's declaration of independence in November did not have the repercussions threatened by Politburo member Viktor Chebrikov, nor did it endanger the Estonian party leadership. On the contrary, the Estonian cause became better known and respected throughout the world.

[101]Ibid., May 19, 1989.
[102]Ibid., May 24, 1989.
[103]Ibid., May 21, 1989.
[104]Ibid., May 3, 1989.
[105]Ibid.
[106]*Gimtasis Kraštas*, May 25–31, 1989, p. 2.
[107]*Tiesa*, May 3, 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fourth, the CPL leadership came to understand that only active and strong party support for republican independence could ultimately restore the party's credibility.[108] Thus, the CPL sought to identify itself with the political will of the Lithuanian people.

Movement Toward Independence

Following the declaration of sovereignty, the people and the party made further concrete moves toward independence and toward greater political and social pluralism. Lithuanian branches of the writers', artists', and other unions quickly broke ties with the center and legally registered themselves as independent Lithuanian organizations. An Olympic Committee was established even before the declaration of sovereignty was adopted, with the hope that it would be accepted as an independent national organization by the International Olympics Committee. In June 1989, the Lithuanian Komsomol became "Lithuania's Communist Youth Association," instead of being a branch of the "all-Union Leninist Communist Youth League." New associations and newspapers, which competed with those sponsored by the authorities, mushroomed. Ties were resumed with the emigration, especially in the United States and Canada.

The CPL could not remain unaffected by its low standing with society. Its current condition is abysmal. According to a poll conducted in May 1989 by the Center of Public Opinion Research of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, the CPL received a positive rating of only 22 points (out of 100), while *Sąjūdis* received 68 points, and the Lithuanian Freedom League received 15. Brazauskas, however, fared better (84) than *Sąjūdis* President Landsbergis (70) or Gorbachev (63).[109] The status and the role of the party became a subject of ever-increasing discussion in the press. Moreover, the party's primacy in the political system was rejected in the draft of republic's new constitution originally prepared by the Academy of Sciences and then revised by *Sąjūdis*. The Vilnius University party organization has proposed that the party itself renounce its leading role, accept the existence of other political parties, and seek to reorganize the all-Union party into an association of communist parties of the Soviet republics.[110] A secretary of a Kaunas party organization has come out strongly for political pluralism. "A multiparty system," he wrote, "would much better allow the expression of political interests of diverse social groups and more adequately would reflect the expectations and hopes of diverse nationalities."[111] He considers that "currently Lithuania is going through a transitional period characterized by political differentiation, which eventually will crystallize into political movements. . . . It is time . . . we prepare formulas for cooperation with other political forces in parliamentary conditions."

In the fall of 1988, Brazauskas condemned demands that the CPL seek broad autonomy from the CPSU or even become an independent party. However, he now has accepted the necessity for discussion of this issue and of the idea of calling a special conference to resolve questions about the party's status and role in society and to formulate a new relationship with the CPSU. At the request of many party organizations, Brazauskas wants the conference to discuss such issues as the party's internal reorganization, democratic centralism, and minority rights, and to develop a policy on such questions as a multi-party system and the role of private property. The party already moved toward acceptance of private property by approving an economic self-management plan with provision for private property and by sponsoring, in June 1989, the adoption of new farm legislation that allows private cultivation of farms of 10 to 50 hectares (22 to 110 acres). Hired labor will be allowed, inheritance rights will be guaranteed, and questions of farm sales will be discussed and resolved later.[112]

A party conference to resolve these problems is scheduled to meet in the fall of 1989. The Central Committee plenum on June 24, however, cautiously indicated that the party would remain loyal to Leninist-type socialism and would seek more autonomy rather than secession from the CPSU.[113] Yet the forces demanding the CPL's complete independence are very strong and the outcome is, therefore, uncertain.

Prospects

The Lithuanian developments of 1988–89 bear strong resemblance to Czechoslovakia's "Prague Spring" of 1968 and put the Kremlin in a similar quandary: should it use all available means to compel Lithuania (as well as Latvia and Estonia) to remain in the em-

[108]Interview with Justas Paleckis, the new chief of the Central Committee's Ideological Department, *Komjaunimo Tiesa*, May 19, 1989.
[109]Ibid., June 16, 1989.
[110]*Universitas Vilnensis* (Vilnius), No. 12, 1989, cited in *Gimtasis Kraštas*, May 25–31, 1989, p. 3.
[111]*Kauno Tiesa* (Kaunas), No. 98, cited in *Gimtasis Kraštas*, May 25–31, 1989, p. 3.
[112]On these measures, see *Tiesa*, May 19 and July 5, 1989.
[113]Ibid., June 28, 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pire, or should it satisfy itself with less than imperial influence over the Baltic republics?

The lines in Lithuania have been clearly drawn. *Sąjūdis* reconfirmed its commitment to independence both at the historical meeting of Baltic popular fronts in Tallinn on May 13–14[114] and after the return of Lithuania's deputies from the convocation of the Congress of People's Deputies in June. On July 12, *Sąjūdis* and its allies began a signature drive for a petition to the government of the USSR, the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic, and the Secretary General of the United Nations demanding that "the USSR abolish the consequences of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, withdraw its occupation forces from the Baltic states, and allow the peoples of those states to determine for themselves what political and social system Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia shall have."[115] Three days later, the republic officials appealed to the population not to sign the petition, because the international situation makes the demand for withdrawal of Soviet military forces "illusory."[116] Party leader Brazauskas expressed concern and "sadness," suggesting that such an ultimatum cannot be taken "seriously."[117] Nevertheless, on June 17 and 18, *Sąjūdis* spokesman Romualdas Ozolas went on television, without the CPL's permission, to appeal for signatures. Thus, the challenge to Soviet centralism has turned into a challenge to Soviet imperialism.

As was discussed above, when the question of independence first arose in the summer of 1988, Aleksandr Yakolev derided the notion, claiming that the Baltic republics were not economically viable.[118] Gorbachev favorably greeted the *Sąjūdis* congress of October 22–23, but his response to the challenge of independence first came on February 14, 1989, when he said that "those who demand Lithuania's secession from the Soviet Union are either people consumed by personal and career ambition or they are simply extremists. They generally do not support socialism."[119] More recently, Moscow's attitude was indicated in the May 22, 1989, issue of *Pravda,* which contained an article by Reyn Myullerson of the Institute for Law and Government at the USSR Academy of Sciences. Myullerson labelled the Tallinn conference declaration on the right to independence and its appeal to the United Nations as a "march forward into the past." In Myullerson's view, demand for sovereignty was an "anachronism," and confederation, moreover, was an "obsolete" form of government organization.

Moscow's negative attitude toward independence derives from ideological, political, and economic concerns. Separation of the Baltic states would further expose the failure of Marxist-Leninist socialism, a political system that the peoples of these republics seek to dismantle. Secession of the republics would also badly reflect on the Soviet Union's foreign image. Finally, although it publicly pays homage to economic decentralization, Moscow does not desire the devolution of actual control over the economy. Thus, the Lithuanians have been extremely frustrated by Moscow's attempts to thwart the Baltic economic proposals. "We constantly feel resistance from central management institutions. Neither the Council of Ministers nor the State Planning Committee wants to understand the economic and political importance of these questions," Brazauskas said on June 24. Moscow itself has no constructive proposals. In the meantime, the "standard of living is sinking. Stores are getting more and more empty."[120]

---

[114]The three popular fronts sponsored a Baltic Assembly in Tallinn on May 13–14, 1989. Party leaders stayed away from this meeting but did not deny it media coverage. Many guests and journalists from Eastern Europe and the West attended the meeting as well.

It proved to be a very important gathering, as the Baltic popular fronts moved toward greater unity. They fully agreed on their national political purposes, urged economic integration of their economies, and pledged mutual help for resolution of problems and difficulties.

The Assembly adopted a number of crucially important documents. The first, a declaration of the rights of the Baltic states, demanded political independence in "a neutral, demilitarized Balto-scandia." The second, a declaration of economic independence, criticized the failure of *perestroyka* to curb economic decline, control inflation, and maintain the standard of living. It also rejected Moscow's proposed general principles for reforming economic management as "incapable of taking the economy out of the crisis." This document again suggested approval of the Baltic economic model adopted in Riga on September 23, 1988, with economic self-management to begin in 1990.

In the appeal to heads of state, to members of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, to the Secretary General of the United Nations, and to the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the Assembly requested that the USSR "renounce and declare null and void" the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939, and that everyone "heed the aspirations of our nations to self-determination and independence."

A statement on Stalin's crimes demanded that the Soviet government pay compensation to the victims of repression and that organizations that participated in the genocide—the statement listed the OGPU, GPU, NKVD and "others"—be declared criminal and that the perpetrators of crimes be made public and tried like the Nazi criminals at Nuremberg.

Furthermore, the Assembly demanded that Moscow disband the troops under the Ministry of the Interior and limit the use of the armed forces strictly to defense against external enemies. Finally, the Assembly sent a telegram to the Supreme Soviet and the Politburo supporting *perestroyka*.

The documents were released by the LIC.

[115]For a text, see the press releases of the *Sąjūdis* Information Agency, *Draugas* (Chicago), July 18 and July 26, 1989. *Sąjūdis*'s allies in this undertaking are: the Lithuanian Freedom League; the Christian Democratic, Democratic, Social Democratic, Nationalist, and "Greens" political parties; the newly established Lithuanian Workers' Association; the Helsinki Group; the Political Prisoners Defense Committee; and the Lithuanian branch of the International Association for the Defense of Human Rights.

[116]*Tiesa*, July 15, 1989.

[117]Ibid.

[118]*The New York Times*, Oct. 28, 1988.

[119]*Tiesa*, Feb. 17, 1989.

[120]Ibid., June 25, 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

General Secretary Gorbachev has recently hardened his position. Using the violent ethnic clashes in the Caucasus and Central Asia as an excuse, in a specially taped television speech on July 1, he raised the specter of the dissolution of the Soviet state. He clearly opposed Baltic independence, although he did not mention the Balts by name. In Gorbachev's view, "there exists now in the Soviet Union an integrated complex of people's economy based on division of labor and cooperation on a national, all-Union scale. All regions of the country are very closely interconnected." To cut these ties would mean "cutting up of a living body."[121] He charged that demands for separation are demands for "economic autarchy" and "spiritual isolation." Gorbachev, in other words, believes that the needs of the empire take precedence over economic acceleration and modernization as the Balts understand it.

The peaceful revolution in the Baltic nevertheless has provoked the CPSU leadership to try to address the Baltic concerns. Gorbachev now stresses that a reorganization of the Soviet federation is necessary and that the implementation "of the principles used by Lenin as a foundation for the union of republics" is required to resolve most of the country's nationality problems.

Recently, two important concessions were made to the Baltic republics. First, in June, the Congress of People's Deputies created a commission for the study and appraisal of all Stalin-Hitler agreements of 1939–40 concerning the Baltic states. Gorbachev chose Aleksandr Yakovlev to chair this commission.[122] The commission was supposed to report before August 23, 1989, the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.

Second, on July 27 (one is tempted to think it happened in response to the new Baltic petition drive), the USSR Supreme Soviet endorsed the Baltic plan for economic self-management as proposed by Lithuania and Estonia.[123] The approval did not come without a floor fight, during which some deputies and government officials expressed fears that economic independence of the Baltic republics would be merely the first step toward political independence from the Soviet Union. The law authorizing self-management, however, will come up for passage by the USSR Supreme Soviet only in October.

The latter action justifies Brazauskas's optimism and uplifts the CPL's standing in Lithuania. It remains to be seen whether the recommendations of the Yakovlev commission will dovetail with the Supreme Soviet's approval of economic independence and will be used by Gorbachev to define a "special" place for the Baltic republics in the Soviet Union.

Internally, all of these development are bound to affect the legitimacy and fortunes of the Lithuanian Communist Party and also to test the unity of *Sąjūdis* as a political force. The future remains uncertain, but *Sąjūdis*, Baltic deputies to the Congress of People's Deputies, and Gorbachev have all demonstrated the ability to compromise. Pressured by economic difficulties and the need for Baltic economic cooperation, Moscow may accept a status for the Baltic countries similar to the autonomous status that the Duchy of Finland had in Imperial Russia from 1809 until the reign of Nicholas II. However, the Balts would see such a status as only a first step toward full emancipation.

[121]Ibid., July 2, 1989; *The New York Times*, July 2, 1989.

[122]Commission membership is listed in *Tiesa*, June 4, 1989. The group included four Lithuanian deputies.

[123]See *The New York Times*, July 27 and 28, 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Latvian National Rebirth

Juris Dreifelds

Latvians are currently undergoing a national reawakening that has given rise to a new political and social activism in the Latvian republic. The process has prompted Latvians to alter their perception of reality and to redefine their goals for the future. A greater degree of pluralism and freedom has been introduced in Latvia, as have been far-reaching changes in the republic's approach to economic management and nationality relations. The most revolutionary change, however, has been in the minds and collective consciousness of the people. Once a defeated nation, the Latvians are now experiencing a resurgence of pride and self-assurance that have wrought a new mood of solidarity, social cohesion, and spiritual rebirth.

This article will examine the events stimulating the current awakening in Latvia, the leading groups and individuals involved in it, and the impact the awakening has had. It will conclude with some prognoses concerning Latvia's future development.

Background

For centuries, the Latvians were ruled by Baltic-German barons, Swedes, and finally the Russian tsars. A Latvian national consciousness emerged in the late 19th century and culminated in 1918 with the founding of an independent Latvian state. The integrity of this state was assured by a peace treaty with Russia signed in 1920 by which Russia renounced all its claims to Latvian territories.

Juris Dreifelds is Associate Professor in the Political Science Department at Brock University (St. Catherines, Ontario). He is author of several articles on Latvia, and is currently writing a book about that country's recent political, economic, and social changes, and about its environmental issues.

A member of the League of Nations, the new Latvian Republic pursued a neutral and peaceful foreign policy.[1] In its benign treatment of ethnic minorities, its progressive welfare legislation, and its cultural and economic achievements, Latvia was broadly comparable to Finland, once also a part of the Russian Empire.[2] Its experience during the interwar period contrasted markedly with that of Soviet republics of that time, where policies of collectivization, terror, and cultural and political homogenization were pursued with unprecedented brutality.

The signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union on August 23, 1939, heralded the end of Latvian independence. The pact's secret protocol relegated the three Baltic republics to the Soviet sphere of influence. Politically isolated and unable to organize any viable resistance against the Soviets, Latvia's government—like Lithuania's and Estonia's—yielded to mounting Soviet pressure, first, to sign a mutual assistance pact with the Soviet Union, which allowed for Soviet military bases on its territory, and, later, to allow large contingents of Soviet troops to enter its territory. Soon thereafter, the Soviets arrested, and in many cases shot or deported to Siberia, many Latvian government officials and heads of various state institutions. Elections were held under Soviet auspices, with only one slate of (Soviet-selected) candidates allowed. Without any referendum to determine the will of the people, and in clear violation of the Latvian constitution, the country was incorporated into the USSR.

[1]For a history of Latvia's period of independence see Georg von Rauch, *The Baltic States: The Years of Independence, 1917–40*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1974. For a discussion of the end of Latvian independence see William J. H. Hough, III, "The Annexation of the Baltic States and Its Effect on the Development of Law Prohibiting Forcible Seizure of Territory," *New York Law School Journal of International and Comparative Law* (New York), Vol. 6, No. 2, 1985, pp. 303-533.

[2]For a comparison of developments in Finland, Estonia, and Latvia, see Juris Dreifelds, "Belorussia and the Baltics," in I. S. Koropeckyj and Gertrude E. Schroeder, Eds., *Economics of Soviet Regions*, New York, Praeger, 1981, pp. 363–70.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

With the arrival of the Red Army, some of the worst features of the Soviet system, notably terror and deportations, were introduced wholesale in Latvia, accentuating even more the contrast between the period of independence and Soviet occupation. Tens of thousands of Latvian citizens, among them the most talented members of the intelligentsia and the most successful farmers and business entrepreneurs, were deported to Siberia, where almost all perished in the Gulag.[3] Latvians responded by mounting an armed resistance to Soviet rule.[4] The resistance continued into the early 1950's until the lack of both suitable terrain for guerrilla warfare and of Western support made such actions futile. Latvian opposition to Soviet rule continued, however, but took on more subtle forms, and seriously hampered the Sovietization of the republic.[5]

Sovietization was also greatly hindered by the dearth of native leaders, especially those whom the Soviets could consider politically trustworthy. Many Latvians had a low regard for the Communist Party and viewed party members as traitors. At the same time, war, deportations, and the flight of nearly 150,000 Latvians, including the best educated citizens, had seriously depleted the pool of experienced personnel suitable for positions of leadership.[6] These, as well as other considerations, caused Soviet administrators to turn to the nearly 100,000 Soviet-born or Soviet-educated individuals with nominal Latvian lineage and background who had come to Latvia from the Soviet Union.[7] Referred to as the "latovichi," this group consisted mostly of individuals who had been forced to hide their Latvian origins during the wave of Stalinist terror in the USSR. The fact that the "latovichi" lacked Latvian language skills, had minimal knowledge of local practices, and were shunned by the indigenous population turned them into a generally intolerant, exaggeratedly pro-Russian, and heavily sovietized force. Soon, individuals from their midst filled most of the important political, managerial and administrative positions in Latvia.

During the thaw in the late 1950's, when Nikita Khrushchev introduced some liberal policies, a more Latvian-oriented party leadership emerged. Led by Eduards Berklavs, it was able to assert its authority in the republic. From 1957 to 1959 this leadership introduced policies aimed at upgrading the status of the Latvian language; promoting Latvian-speaking administrators; reorienting education toward Latvian related subjects; slowing the influx of workers from other republics; and rationalizing the republic's economy by taking into account the limitations of its labor supply, the availability of its resources, and the pattern of its consumption.[8] These policies precipitated opposition from Moscow centralizers, and Berklavs, as well as nearly 2,000 party and government officials who shared his views, were purged in July 1959.[9] Soon thereafter, the "latovichi" and local Russians passed decrees reversing what they called Berklavs's "national communist" policies, and moved aggressively to extirpate all vestiges of "bourgeois nationalism" at every level of society.[10]

Almost 30 years of relentless Sovietization and Russification followed, more far-reaching in its scope than in Estonia and Lithuania. The efficient execution of these policies can be attributed in large part to two "latovichi," Arvīds Pelše and Augusts Voss, who have become today targets of Latvian ridicule and hatred. (Pelše eventually became a member of the CPSU Politburo, while Voss became the Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet's Council of Nationalities.)[11] During this period, Latvians succumbed to collective stress—characterized by increasing rates of alcoholism, divorce, premature death, mental breakdowns,

[3]See Romuald J. Misiunas and Rein Taagepera, *The Baltic States: Years of Dependence, 1940–1980* (hereafter cited as *The Baltic States)*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1983, pp. 38–42.

[4]According to Soviet historian J. Dzintars, about 40,000 troops fought in the ranks of destroyer battalions mobilized to quell guerrilla warfare in Latvia. See *Cina* (Riga), Mar. 23, 1988; see also ibid., Mar. 15, 1988, and *Padomju Jaunatne* (Riga), Mar. 23, 1988.

[5]Ādolfs Šilde, *Resistance Movement in Latvia*, Stockholm, The Latvian National Foundation, 1972.

[6]An assessment of losses of population due to various reasons is provided in Misiunas and Taagepera, *The Baltic States*, pp. 274–80.

[7]One Soviet source claims that about 100,000 people of Latvian ethnic origin arrived after the war from other Soviet republics. See B. Mežgailis and P. Zvīdriņš, *Padomju Latvijas Iedzivotaji* (Soviet Latvian Population), Riga, Liesma, 1973, p. 153. This claim may be slightly exaggerated in view of the recent acknowledgement that nearly 74,000 Latvians living in the Soviet Union prior to World War II had been killed by Stalin. *Literatūra un Māksla* (Riga), Mar. 18, 1988.

[8]Misiunas and Taagepera, *The Baltic States*, Ch. IV.

[9]The Latvian Communist Party journal *Padomju Latvijas Komunists* (Riga), No. 2, 1989, published the first part of the minutes of the July 7–8, 1959, extraordinary Latvian Central Committee plenum that purged Berklavs and other reformers of that time. The reason for the decision to publish the minutes, as stated by the editors in a brief introduction, was that "the idea has been raised that many complicated problems in the life of the republic are rooted in the decisions and positions of this plenum" (see p. 78). The minutes are accompanied by extensive explanatory footnotes about the plenum's personalities and events. The minutes of the whole plenum were published in subsequent issues of the party journal.

[10]Juris Dreifelds, "Latvian National Demands and Group Consciousness Since 1959," in George W. Simmonds, Ed., *Nationalism in the USSR & Eastern Europe in the Era of Brezhnev & Kosygin*, Detroit, University of Detroit Press, 1977; Dzintra Bungs, "Economic Autonomy Appeals to Baltic Communists," Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty, (hereafter RFE-RL), *Radio Free Europe Research*, (Munich), Baltic Situation Report No. 7, Oct. 28, 1987.

[11]The October 1988 resolutions of the Latvian People's Front demanded the recall of Voss from the Supreme Soviet because he had lost the confidence of the people and the deletion of Pelše's name from the title of the Riga Polytechnical Institute. *Padomju Jaunatne*, Oct. 10, 1988.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

abandonment of children, crime, alienation from group concerns, and most important, the loosening of the social bonds that bind together members of a nation.[12] Most of these problems did not receive media coverage at the time. It seemed as though Latvians had outwardly accepted the status quo, as though, in keeping with the so-called "Stockholm syndrome,"[13] many of them were supporting their Soviet oppressors' policies of denationalization.

Awakening

It was Mikhail Gorbachev's program of reform aimed at liberalizing the Soviet system that stimulated the awakening of Latvians to their national predicament. The awakening has taken on a particular intensity because Latvians have come to fear for their national survival. There exists a pervasive sense among them that if the new revival fails, the Latvian nation will become inevitably extinct. Jānis Peters, one of the most admired Latvian poets and chief organizer of the Latvian People's Front, has noted bluntly that if the process of recovery were to fail as it did in 1959, then "we will not rise a second time."[14] Playwright Māra Zālite, has claimed dramatically at a plenum of the Latvian SSR Writers' Union that "Latvians are presently on the threshold of extinction." She asked those present whether they were prepared to go on living with the thought that "we are the last generation of intellectuals of a disappearing nation."[15]

This "now or never" mentality is fueled by the increasing publicity being given to critical problems facing the Latvian nation, problems which do not exist to the same degree in other Baltic republics. The most serious of these is demographic minoritization. Since the end of the prewar era, when they made up 77 percent of the republic's population, Latvians have lost ground to other nationality groups, and according to the 1989 Soviet census, they now represent only 50.7 percent of the total population.[16] Given that a relatively high proportion of Latvians are elderly, it is safe to assume that Latvians are a minority within most age groups under 65. This assumption is supported by data from the 1979 census, which showed that Latvians constitute only 40.3 percent of all inhabitants with birthdates between 1945 and 1949.[17] The same census also indicated that in 1979, Latvians represented only 38.3 percent of the population in the city of Riga, and 45.1 percent of the population of all urban areas. Of the seven largest Latvian cities, only Jelgava with its 52.1 percent Latvian majority stood out as a Latvian "bastion." The problem was not limited to urban centers; even certain rural areas and several districts in eastern Latvia lost their Latvian majority.[18]

The loss of demographic primacy has been due mainly to the tremendously high rates of in-migration from other republics and the relatively higher rate of natural increase among the immigrants as compared to the indigenous population. During the entire postwar period, Latvia had to accommodate a net influx of over 700,000 migrants from other republics.[19] In 1987, for example, 135,861 individuals decided to come to Latvia, while 117,000 left the republic for other areas. The "net gain" thus stood at 18,827.[20] That year, in-migration accounted for 65 percent of the total population growth. The low natural increase among Latvians, plus the high numbers of elderly in Latvia, have resulted at times in a negative growth rate, with more Latvians dying than being born.[21]

Losing majority status would no doubt have serious psychological, political, and even administrative consequences for the Latvians. The most important of these would be the loss of political power. For even if the most democratic voting procedures were to

[12]Juris Dreifelds, "Demographic Trends in Latvia," *Nationalities Papers* (Charleston, IL), Vol. 12, No. 1, 1984.

[13]The Stockholm syndrome is a term used to define the changes in loyalty that come about in kidnaping victims, most notably the formation of positive bonds between captor and hostage. It was first coined during Sweden's dramatic Sveriges Kreditbank robbery, during which hostages taken came to feel strange affection for the men who were holding them prisoners. It was later popularized during the Patty Hearst kidnapping and trial.

[14]*Literatūra un Māksla*, Mar. 18, 1988.

[15]*Ibid.*, June 10, 1988.

[16]*Dzimtenes Balss* (Riga), May 11, 1989, states that the total population of Latvia in 1989 was 2.68 million, of which 1.36 million were Latvians. In 1959, Latvians formed 62 percent of the republic's total population; in 1970, 56.8 percent; and in 1979, 53.7 percent. Latvijas PSR Valsts Statistikas Komiteja, *Latvijas PSR Tautu Forums: Iss Statistisko Datu Krajums* (Latvian SSR Nationalities Forum: Brief Statistical Data), Riga, Latvian SSR Nationalities Forum, 1988, p. 14.

[17]TsSU Latviyskoy SSR, *Itogi vsesoyuznoy perepisi naseleniya 1979 goda po Latviyskoy SSR* (The Results of the All-Union Population Census of 1979 as Pertains to the Latvian SSR) Riga, 1982, pp. 31 and 90–91. The percentage of Latvians in each age category in 1979 was as follows: ages 0–15 (55.4 percent), 16–19 (50.5), 20–24 (45), 25–29 (42.5), 30–34 (40.3), 35–39 (56.2), 40–44 (51.6), 45–49 (54.4), 50–54 (51.4), 55–59 (52.3), 60+ (64.9).

[18]TsSU Latviyskoy SSR, *Chislennost', sostav i razmeshcheniye naseleniya Latviyskoy SSR po gorodam i rayonam po dannym perepisi naseleniya 1979 goda* (The Numbers, Composition, and Distribution of Population in the Latvian SSR by Cities and Rayons, According to the Data of the 1979 Population Census), Riga, 1980, pp. 135–50. The percent of Latvians in Daugavpils was 12.6; Jūrmala, 48.2; Liepaja, 41.9; Rezekne, 35.0; and Ventspils, 47.5.

[19]*Literatūra un Māksla*, Apr. 15, 1989.

[20]*Latvijas PSR Tautu Forums . . .*, p. 20.

[21]For the three years for which official data are available—1980, 1985, and 1987—Latvians showed a natural increase of -2.2 thousand, - 0.2 thousand, and +2.2 thousand, respectively. During those same years, Russians living in Latvia recorded rates of +3.9, +3.8 and +5 thousand. Ibid., p. 19.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be instituted in Latvia to determine issues of vital importance to the Latvians, if this group were a minority, it would inevitably be defeated—unless, of course, it could get support from those minority groups that are generally lumped together into the Russian-speaking category of population.[22] A minority status for Latvians would also threaten, at least theoretically, the legitimacy of Latvia as a republic. (According to Stalin's definition, which has never been refuted, a national republic requires that the titular nationality comprise a majority of the population.)

Also of serious concern is the status of the Latvian language. The ebb and flow of migration and the minority presence of Latvians in urban areas have hindered wider usage of the Latvian language within the republic. Latvians have been forced to go more than half way in accommodating immigrants who fail to learn the language. The 1979 census indicated that 58.3 percent of Latvians had learned Russian, whereas only 19.1 percent of Russians in Latvia had learned Latvian. This led to a paradoxical situation: in 1979, more people in Latvia spoke Russian (76.8 percent) than Latvian (62.9 percent).[23] Not surprisingly, such linguistic imbalance together with demographic minoritization have gradually led to the dominance of Russian in almost all areas of work, with only some groups of Latvians—mostly in rural areas, or in cultural and educational occupations—speaking Latvian at work (see Table 1).

Finally, there is the ecological issue—foremost, the pollution generated by industries that lie outside the control of local Latvian institutions. According to a Riga professor of medicine, the ecological situation has moved beyond the boundaries of "health-threatening," and in his estimation Latvians find themselves "in a zone of disaster or catastrophe as evidenced by the increase of several ecologically related illnesses."[24] A doctor of biology has estimated that, as a result of such pollution, between 20 and 25 percent of all babies born in Latvia suffer from birth defects.[25]

Another perceived danger is the potential of nuclear contamination. Latvians, already nervous about the Ignalina atomic power station (located in Lithuania several dozen kilometers away from eastern Latvia),[26] recently learned that the government plans to construct an atomic electric station in western Latvia. A major controversy erupted over the construction, because of the fear of a Chernobyl'-type nuclear accident—especially in view of the poor quality of Soviet workmanship. An additional worry to Latvians is the fact that this project would require the importation of 40,000 laborers from other republics.[27]

Today the consequences for Latvians of these various problems appear self-evident and are widely discussed in the media and various other forums. Howev-

Table 1: Representation of Latvians in Different Branches of the Latvian Economy, as of June 1, 1987

(in percent of workforce)

Branch	Percent
Industry	38.1
Agriculture	69.1
Construction	45.8
Transport	33.8
Communications	56.7
Trade, public catering, material technical supply, sales and procurement	48.7
Information and computer services	48.1
Housing, communal economy, and personal services	45.4
Health protection, physical culture, and social security	53.5
Education	58.8
Culture and art	74.6
Science and scientific services	42.2
Credit and state insurance	55.1
State and economic administrative organs, administrative apparat of cooperative and public organizations	56.4
Economy as a whole	*47.6*

SOURCE: Latvijas PSR Valsts Statistikas Komiteja, *Latvijas PSR Tautu Forums: Iss Statistisko Datu Krajums* (Latvian Nationalities Forum: Brief Statistical Data), Riga, 1988, pp. 23–24.

[22]The effects of minoritization were raised at a March 30, 1989, plenum of the creative unions by Juris Bojārs, one of the leading jurists of the republic. *Literatūra un Māksla*, Apr. 8, 1989.

[23]Latvijas PSR Centrala Statistikas Parvalde, *Latvijas PSR Tautas Saimniecība 1980* (The Latvian SSR National Economy for the Year 1980), Riga, Avots, 1981, p. 19.

[24]Ilmārs Lazovskis, *Literatūra un Māksla*, June 10, 1988.

[25]Pēteris Cimdiņš, in ibid.

[26]There were allegedly "three fires in two months" and "32 unplanned work stoppages of machinery" at the Ignalina atomic plant. *The Christian Science Monitor* (Boston), Sept. 14, 1988. The issue of fears about Ignalina was discussed in *Cīņa*, Oct. 16, 1988, and in *Dzimtenes Balss*, Sept. 29, 1988.

[27]The chief engineer at one of the institutes of the Ministry of Atomic Energy in Kiev indicated in an interview that a Chernobyl'-like incident will never occur again, but "among you Latvians—whenever we mention the word atom, everybody shudders." Refering to the project in Latvia, he promised that a new city of 30,000 to 40,000 would be built by workers from other republics and that adjoining factories would be constructed to provide jobs for the women in the families of imported workers. Any workers not yet married would have no problems, he maintained, since Latvia does not have a shortage of women. "There will be international families, and interethnic questions will become resolved by themselves. We will bring in new workers, and there will be a city. You must understand that this is not a local issue but a project of significance to the entire Soviet Union," he concluded. See *Padomju Jaunatne*, June 3, 1988.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

er, the road to a collective consciousness on national issues was a long one and took several years, despite the prevailing conditions of *glasnost'*.

The Process of Rebirth

The process of rebirth among Latvians began slowly at first, with a reassertion of their commitment to the Latvian heritage and a concern with ecological issues. The first in a chain of events that spurred rebirth was the founding of folk culture groups.

The first folk culture groups to be revived in Latvia were among the almost extinct Livs, an indigenous ethnic group whose cultural patterns closely resemble those of the Estonians. These groups were already in existence for three years, when a more formal Latvian-oriented folk culture group was organized in 1976, calling itself the "Skandinieki." According to one of its founders, Helmī Stalts, this group was inspired by the success of folk culture groups in Estonia and Lithuania. Despite warnings that "they would not come to a good end," the Skandinieki began touring all regions of Latvia, reviving local songs, legends, and traditions, and convincing people that "we have no right to rupture [our link] with the folk song, the folk wisdom that has been nurtured for hundreds of years, from generation to generation." They railed against the faint-heartedness of their generation and exhorted it to pass on the torch of Latvian consciousness to the younger generation, so that "our children will not have to curse us."[28] The folklore movement thus became part of the Latvian struggle for national self-esteem, for the reclaiming of one's roots, for the strengthening of the family through involvement of people of all ages in a common endeavor.

As folk culture groups began to mushroom throughout Latvia during the early 1980's, they met strong resistance from the Latvian Ministry of Culture and various functionaries.[29] According to Stalts, the officials' "fierce opposition" to these groups grew out of their perception that "beneath the song there lies something much more powerful." Folklore had the unique ability to awaken pride in being Latvian and to destroy inferiority complexes by highlighting the fact that Latvians as a nationality "also have significant values."[30]

At about the same time that folk culture groups were becoming popular, a small movement dedicated to the repair of old churches and architectural monuments and to environmental protection began to impress people with its members' dedication and hard work. The founder of this movement, Arvīds Ulme, a forester and poet in his mid-30's, admitted later that "we clearly understood that our efforts were primarily directed at raising the consciousness of the general public."[31] (By 1987, this movement grew into the Environmental Protection Club, one of the most visible activist organizations in Latvia, which later gave birth to many other organizations, including the Latvian National Independence Movement.)

Then came the US-Soviet Conference on mutual relations organized by the Chautauqua Institution, the Eisenhower World Affairs Institute, and the USSR-USA Society, which took place September 15–19, 1986, in Jūrmala, Latvia. US representatives at this meeting reaffirmed their government's commitment to a policy of non-recognition of Soviet annexation of the Baltic republics and criticized the Soviet Union's Baltic policy. By showing the Latvians that the world had not forgotten them, the US representatives helped lift spirits, heightened expectations for a reevaluation of Latvia's status within the USSR, and added impetus to the national revival.[32]

In October of the same year, Latvians from all walks of life participated in a campaign to stop the construction of a hydro-electric dam on Latvia's largest and most cherished river, the Daugava. They feared that the project would be destructive to farmlands, animals, plants, and rural settlements, and that it would disrupt the river's ecosystem. Popular mobilization was achieved by the independent initiative of two men—journalist Dainis Īvāns, then a 32-year old former school teacher who was later elected President of the People's Front, and Artūrs Snips, a 38-year old computer spe-

[28]Helmī Stalts, "The Path of the Folksong," *Padomju Latvijas Sieviete* (Riga), No. 4, 1989.

[29]*Literatūra un Māksla*, Apr. 22, 1988; *Baltic Forum* (New York) Vol. 1, No. 1, 1984, pp. 100–01.

[30]See Stalts, *loc. cit.*

[31]Interview with Arvīds Ulme, President of the Environment Protection Club, in *Briviba* (Stockholm), English edit., No. 5, 1988. According to the president of the Latvian People's Front, Dainis Īvāns: "In Latvia everything began with the movement to save the environment. The Environmental Protection Club was formed. Individual fighters arose—prophets who were guided by the conviction and unbending faith in the justice [of their cause]. Slowly ever more people joined and assembled around it. It seemed as if people were slowly arising from deep slumber. The people became active in the discussion of the most varied social and political questions. The big awakening had started." *Jūrmala* (City of Jūrmala), Oct. 20, 1988. For a review of Ulme's ideas and of the Latvian environmental movement, see Vita Terauds, *The Rise of Grass Roots Environmental Groups Under Gorbachev: A Case Study of Latvia*, Washington, DC, Johns Hopkins University SAIS, 1989.

[32]40,000 copies of the proceedings of this conference were published in Latvian, in *Jūrmalas Dialogi* (The Dialogues of Jūrmala), Riga, Avots, 1987. A good analysis of media treatment of the conference is provided by Dzintra Bungs, "After the Jūrmala Conference: Imperfect Glasnost," RFE-RL, *Radio Free Europe Research*, Baltic Area Situation Report No. 8, Dec. 9, 1986

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cialist and writer, who had worked at a hydroelectric station. While on a holiday in the summer of 1986 near the site of the proposed dam, Īvāns had noticed and become shocked by the height at which pegs marking the expected new water line had been placed. Upon returning home to Riga, he met with Snips and convinced him of the need to look into the project. After conducting a preliminary investigation, both men concluded that the hydro-dam project had some serious errors and did not make sense economically and ecologically. Hoping to publish an authoritative article on the subject, they sought, and, after much tribulation, gained access to project plans, documents, and logbooks. Their article condemning the project appeared in the October 14, 1986, issue of the Latvian literary newspaper, *Literatūra un Māksla*. It energized a previously apathetic society, which responded with demonstrations, meetings, and tens of thousands of letters protesting the dam.[33]

In light of this, the Latvian Council of Ministers decided to create a commission to reevaluate the hydroelectric project. In January 1987, the commission issued a negative assessment of the project, a position that was backed up by the USSR Academy of Sciences. In early November 1987, the USSR Council of Ministers passed a decree to stop further construction of the dam.[34] For the first time in nearly half a century, Latvians savored a collective success.[35] The attitude of subservience and feeling of powerlessness began to dissipate as a new ebullience and hope permeated society, especially the young.

In 1987, Latvian activists became trailblazers within the Soviet Union, feeling out and even stretching the boundaries of *glasnost'* with their "calendar" demonstrations.[36] These demonstrations, which received extensive media coverage throughout the world, including the USSR, were seen by many in the West as the litmus test of Gorbachev's sincerity and seriousness in implementing liberalization. The demonstrations were organized by a small human rights group, formed in summer 1986 by three workers from the city of Liepaja, calling itself "Helsinki '86." The purpose of the demonstrations was to publicly commemorate the events of June 14, 1941 (the mass deportation of Latvians to the Soviet Union); August 23, 1939 (the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact); and November 18, 1918 (proclamation of Latvian independence)—three turning points in Latvian history that had been distorted or ignored in official publications.[37]

Helsinki '86 hoped that by commemorating these dates, it could highlight the fact that an independent Latvia, founded in 1918, had been forcibly annexed by the Soviets in 1940, without the consent of the people and contrary to all tenets of international law, and that tens of thousands of Latvians had lost their lives in the Gulag. It hoped to thereby undermine the legitimacy of Soviet rule in Latvia. For although Soviet authorities could readily blame Soviet deportations of Latvians on the excesses of Stalinism, they could hardly hide the fact that Hitler "gave away" the Baltic republics to Stalin, and that this set the stage for the Soviets' forcible incorporation of Latvia into the Soviet Union.[38] It also hoped to discredit the official Soviet interpretation of Latvian history, namely that a socialist revolution in Latvia in 1940 had led to the voluntary incorporation of the republic into the Soviet Union.

The public commemorations of significant historic events precipitated systematic harassment of demonstrators by authorities, particularly during the celebration of Independence Day. Nevertheless, the demonstrators persisted, displaying ingenuity and courage.

The calendar demonstrations of 1987 were mostly organized by the Latvian working-class youth, without much support from the intelligentsia. They became widely publicized and laid the groundwork for the coming mass movements that developed in Latvia and the other Baltic republics.[39] They were certainly a catalyst in the reawakening of the Latvian intelligentsia, which by the spring of 1988 took on the leading role in articu-

[33]Zigfrīds Dzedulis, "Not Only the Two of Us" *Liesma* (Riga), No. 12, 1987, p. 3.

[34]For a review of the hydro-electric dam issue, see Dzintra Bungs, "Hydroelectric Power Station Project Discontinued," RFE-RL, *Radio Free Europe Research*, Baltic Area Situation Report No. 9, Dec. 18, 1987; Nils R. Muiznieks, "The Daugavpils Hydro Station and Glasnost in Latvia," *Journal of Baltic Studies* (Mahwah, NJ), No. 1, 1987; and Juris Dreifelds, "Two Latvian Dams: Two Confrontations," *Baltic Forum*, No. 1, 1989.

[35]The success of the ecological campaign in Latvia came after similar successes in other Soviet republics. For example, the project to divert the Ob and Yenisey rivers was shelved in August 1986. The proposed drilling for oil in the Baltic Sea off the coast of Lithuania was cancelled for ecological reasons in 1986.

[36]Latvians were the first in the Baltic to initiate such demonstrations. In fact, 1987 was essentially the Latvians' year of leadership. The following year, initiative for change was seized by the Estonians. Lithuanians have come to play a major role in 1989, especially in terms of strategies within the USSR Congress of People's Deputies and the USSR Supreme Soviet. In view of the traditional bonds and solidarity between the three republics, what one republic does has strong impact on what the other two do.

[37]For interviews with the Latvian and Estonian organizers of the demonstrations and with the ideological secretary of the Latvian Communist Party, see *Baltic Forum*, No. 2, 1987. For an overview of the critical response in the Russian-language press to the demonstrations, see *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* (Columbus, OH), Sept. 23, 1987, pp. 1–8. A good overview of the November event is provided by Dzintra Bungs in "A Survey of the Demonstrations on November 18," RFE-RL, *Radio Free Europe Research*, Baltic Area Situation Report No. 9, Dec. 18, 1987.

It is interesting to note that, before the Nov. 18 event, British double agent Kim Philby was summoned out of retirement to speak on Latvian TV and discredit Latvian nationalism. *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), Nov. 19, 1987.

[38]For a discussion of Soviet incorporation of Latvia and events leading to it, sees Misiunas and Taagepera, *The Baltic States*, pp. 15–29.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lating Latvian national grievances. By bringing about a sense of national rebirth among all sectors of society, the organization at the forefront of these demonstrations, Helsinki '86, eventually forced the Communist Party to reconsider its interpretation of Latvian history and its attitude to the demonstrations. By 1988, when demonstrations were repeated on the same three calendar dates, some more progressive party officials and prominent party media commentators stood shoulder to shoulder with the demonstrators, even though they came from opposite ends of the political spectrum. On November 18, 1988, an officially sanctioned concert was held in the same theater where Latvia's independence had been declared 70 years earlier.[40]

Intellectual Activism

A major sign of renewed public activism on the part of the intelligentsia came on March 3, 1988, during an executive meeting of the Latvian creative unions. The meeting had been called to discuss the tragic consequences of Stalinism in Latvia and the responsibility of the creative intelligentsia in dealing with this issue. The chairman, Jānis Peters, invited the artistic community to explore the subtler manifestations of Stalinism, which aims to "prevent independent thinking, forbid an attachment to a nation and a language and . . . destroy historical memory and cultural heritage." As a result of this meeting, two commissions were created for the purpose of commemorating and rehabilitating victims of the personality cult.[41]

Three weeks later, on March 25, the creative unions organized a widely publicized demonstration at the Cemetery of the Brethren to commemorate the 1949 deportations of more than 43,000 Latvians to Siberia. This demonstration effectively overshadowed a parallel demonstration at the Freedom Monument organized by the more radical Helsinki '86 and other "informal" groups that had led the previous three "calendar" events. It should be noted, however, that organizers of the demonstration at the Freedom Monument were at a disadvantage: not only were many of them, notably those heading the human rights groups, harassed by the KGB and militia and prevented from attending the event, but their demonstration was not accorded the publicity given by the media to the one organized by the creative unions.

Defining themselves as the moderate opposition, the creative unions were able to both fulfill grass-roots desires for self-expression and assuage Communist Party apprehensions concerning their program. As a result, they succeeded in providing an officially sanctioned demonstration at the cemetery that people could attend without fear of possible consequences. The media and union organizers worked together to elicit a positive mood at the demonstration and to stress the need for mutual support, healing, and national bonding. More than 25,000 people from all walks of life joined a procession, carrying candles and expressing long-suppressed grief.[42] Another step on the road to psychological recovery had been taken.

The creative intelligentsia opted for the road to political emancipation several months later at the June 1–2 Latvian Writers' Union plenum, which followed on the heels of a similar plenum in Estonia.[43] Attended by the leaders of other creative unions and by widely respected intellectuals, the plenum had been called to formulate a response to the theses drafted for the 19th CPSU Conference, scheduled for the end of the month in Moscow.[44] The speeches delivered by several dozen prominent intellectuals at this gathering were extremely blunt and crossed a threshold of political expression and openness not breached at an official gathering in Latvia for over half a century. These speeches were later published in Latvian newspapers together with the plenum's daring resolution that soon became a blueprint for subsequent national demands in the republic.[45]

The resolution, which was eventually endorsed by the newly established Cultural Council—an umbrella

[39]For example, following the Latvian initiative, other Balts joined in for the August 23 demonstration, although their numbers were fewer. Juris Kaza reported in *The Christian Science Monitor,* Aug. 27, 1987, that on August 23, there were between 500 and 1,000 people demonstrating in Vilnius, 2,000 in Tallinn and 7,000 in Riga. "The most dramatic events took place in Latvia, which had already experienced a mass demonstration on June 14." According to Dzintra Bungs, Helsinki '86 also initiated the demonstrations in Lithuania and Estonia. See, "The Latvian Demonstration of 23 August 1987," in RFE-RL, *Radio Free Europe Research,* Baltic Area Situation Report No. 7, Oct. 28, 1987.

[40]*The Christian Science Monitor,* June 27, 1988. *Literatūra un Māksla,* Nov. 25, 1988.

[41]*Literatūra un Māksla,* Mar. 18, 1988.

[42]According to *Dzimtenes Balss,* Mar. 17, 1988, 43,231 people were deported from Latvia in March 25, 1949. The commemorations at the Freedom Monument and the Cemetery of Brethren were reviewed in *Baltic Bulletin* (Los Angeles), Vol. 7, Nos. 2 and 3, 1988.

[43]The Estonian plenum took place on April 1–2. For an overview of this plenum see Toomas Ilves, "Cultural Unions Adopt Resolution on Nationality Reforms," in RFE-RL, *Radio Free Europe Research,* Baltic Area Situation Report No. 6, June 3, 1988.

[44]The official theme of this plenum was "The Actual Problems of Soviet Latvian Culture on the Eve of the 19th CPSU Conference." The editor of *Literatūra un Māksla,* in the newspaper's June 10, 1988, issue also indicated concern that forces of stagnation might influence the Moscow conference. The choice of Voss as a delegate was seen as symptomatic.

[45]The plenum speeches and photographs of the speakers were published in the June 10, 17, and July 1 and 8, 1988, editions of *Literatūra un Māksla.*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

organization for the creative unions in the republic—called for an official review and reassessment of critical historical events that have affected the mainsprings of Latvian existence, foremost, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939, Latvia's incorporation into the USSR in 1940, the deportations of 1941 and 1949, and the purges of 1959. It strongly opposed unregulated migration into Latvia and deplored the loss of primacy of the Latvian language. It asked for recognition of Latvia as a sovereign and national state within the Soviet federation with rights to its own national symbols, a permanent foreign minister, diplomatic representation, membership in various world organizations (e.g., the United Nations, UNESCO, and the International Olympics Committee), and a law regulating Latvian citizenship.

The resolution also incorporated a demand for the republic's right to have its own foreign correspondents, for the right of Latvia's citizens to work and study abroad, and for an expansion of ties with Latvians in the West. Traditional tenets of liberalism received attention as well. Besides calling for freedom of expression, the resolution supported the right of privacy in mail and telephone communication, greater access to data affecting Latvians (census and criminal statistics), the declassification of all "special fund" books and outdated government documents and archives after a period of time, the precise definition of what constitutes a "state secret," and more effective control over the Ministry of the Interior, the KGB, and the armed forces.

In the realm of nationality relations, the resolution proposed that viable ethnic groups in the republic be allowed their own educational institutions or programs; that Russian and Latvian schools be made equal; that further expansion of mixed-language schools be reconsidered; that frequent polls and studies of nationality relations be conducted and publicized; and, that the military allow servicemen to choose between Latvian and Russian for their language of training.[46]

Environmental issues also received much attention. Foremost, the resolution insisted that natural resources of the republic be used for the benefit of the population, that the republic have greater say regarding projects to be implemented on its territories, and that Latvia participate in international programs for environmental protection and ecological research.

The People's Front

The plenum resolution spurred a coalition of 17 nationally prominent intellectuals, clergymen, and human rights activists from the Helsinki '86 group to form on June 21 an organizing committee for a Latvian People's Front. Among them were writers Viktors Avotiņš and Artūrs Snips; journalists Dainis Īvāns, Dzintra Krievāne, Ilmārs Latkovskis; Juris Rubenis and Modris Plāte—activists in the religious rights group Renaissance and Renewal; Valdis Turins, a history teacher and vice-president of the Environmental Protection Club; the philosopher Aleksandr Maltsev; Juris Vidiņš, a physician and leading spokesman for Helsinki '86; Vladimir Bogdanov, a worker and member of the Social Activists' Club; and Ivars Žukovkis, another worker and editor of the unofficial journal *Auseklis*.[47] However, Peters and the leadership of the creative unions moved quickly to thwart this effort and to put organizational initiative in the hands of individuals less visibly affiliated with protest and opposition groups. Later, President of the People's Front Īvāns would explain the situation thus:

The first variant was signed in the name of Helsinki '86 and other informal groups. My signature was also there. But evidently someone did not like the surnames and organizations listed under this invitation. Hence a "new" document was published—in reality the same text only with the signatures of different people.[48]

Under the guidance of a collective "brain trust" led by Peters, mobilization was begun at the grass-roots level and People's Front support groups were created during the summer months. New sectors of the intelligentsia were tapped, with prominent jurists, philosophers, sociologists and economists being increasingly recruited for the People's Front.[49]

The People's Front was not to meant to replace already-existing organizations, but to serve as an umbrella organization for them. Indeed, the various organizations and informal groups in Latvia helped shape the profile of the People's Front. Foremost among them were the Latvian Environmental Protection Club (VAK), or the "Green Movement" as it is often called, the then newly formed Latvian National Independence Movement, and Helsinki '86. During the months of the Front's gestation, the VAK and the Latvian National Independence organized many consciousness-raising events, which helped create a new spirit of activism.

The VAK, which for several years had devoted its time mostly to improving the environment and refurbishing cultural monuments, became more politicized in 1988. Several of its activities gained national recogni-

[46] Ibid., June 10, 1988.
[47] See Dzintra Bungs, "People's Front Planned," in RFE-RL, *Radio Free Europe Research*, Baltic Area Situation Report No. 7, July 13, 1988.
[48] *Jūrmala*, Oct. 20, 1988.
[49] Ibid.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion, and respect for the movement grew among a wide circle of Latvians. On April 27, 1988, members of VAK successfully organized wide-scale protests against the planned construction of a Riga subway. They argued that this construction would lower the water table and eventually affect the fragile foundations of all historical buildings in the 800-year-old city. Moreover, the project would require the importation of thousands of workers from other republics, and would thus aggravate the already desperate demographic situation in Latvia.[50] The Riga metro construction project was shelved.

Spurred on by its success, VAK then organized protests against the proposed atomic electric station near Liepāja, environmental conditions in the port city of Ventspils, air pollution in Riga and Olaine, the effluent coming from the largest Latvian pulp and paper mill (in Sloka), and pollution of the Baltic Sea, especially the beaches at Jūrmala. In keeping with its emphasis on strengthening national spirit and pride, VAK also initiated mass rallies for the reintroduction of the Latvian flag of independence, the reinstitution of the Latvian Midsummer Night festival "Līgo svētki," and a return to official recognition of the Christmas and Easter holidays.[51] Despite a membership of only several thousand people, VAK had a strong impact on "alternative thinking" in Latvia. It also played a major role in giving rebirth to Latvian national consciousness and raising public awareness of the environmental issue.

Also active during the Front's gestation was the Latvian National Independence Movement. Many of its members had worked underground for several years and were members of VAK. On June 17, 1988, several of these individuals met to debate the founding of the Movement. A debate arose as to the nature of this new organization. One group wanted the organization to be democratic in orientation, another wanted it to have a nationalistic orientation. Eventually, both orientations were accepted as complementary. On July 10, the Movement held an open meeting at the Arcadia Gardens in Riga to attract new members and greater public support. The Voice of America and Radio Free Europe had carried news of the impending meeting, and as a result many people attended the meeting to learn more about this organization's platform. More than 200 people then joined the Latvian National Independence Movement.[52] The event was covered by Soviet Latvian radio and television.

The most visible leader of the independence movement was Eduards Berklavs, the former vice chairman of the Council of Ministers who had been purged in 1959 because of his supposed "Latvian nationalism." Berklavs's views were published in several essays and interviews that appeared in various journals and newspapers.[53] Under his guidance, the Movement's appeal grew. At a July 31 meeting of this organization, 586 new people joined as members.[54]

For its part, Helsinki '86 was also active during this period. However, its ranks had split into several factions, and a number of its founding members had been forced by the authorities to emigrate to the West.

The founding congress of the People's Front, originally planned for the beginning of October, took place on October 8–9 so as not to coincide with a similar Estonian congress in Tallinn.[55] On the eve of the congress, a rally attracting several hundred thousand people was held in Mežaparks and an euphoric mood enveloped many participants. The mood was created by the sight of countless Latvian national flags and the sound of patriotic speeches and long-forbidden songs.[56] For the first time since communist rule was introduced in Latvia, authorities granted permission for a church service in the Domas Cathedral. The service was held on the second day of the congress and was broadcast on radio and television.[57] The two young ministers who officiated at the event, Juris Rubenis and Modris Plāte, were members of the religious rights organization Rebirth and Renewal, and active supporters of the People's Front. Their actions in organizing this religious event were greatly opposed by the timorous old-guard Lutheran leadership.

The more than 1,000 delegates elected by the various organizations to attend the congress represented over 110,000 dues-paying members of diverse social origins and political beliefs. About one-third were Communist Party members; the others came from such organizations as the Environmental Protection Club, Helsinki '86, the Latvian National Independence Movement, and Rebirth and Renewal. The occupational

[50]G. Rakis, "Metro Is Not A Friend," *Staburags '88* (Riga), No. 2, 1988, pp. 20–23.

[51]See ibid., Nos. 2 and 3, 1988.

[52] A. Jokovics, "The Latvian Independence Movement Announces Its Formation," *Neatkariba* (Riga), No. 1, September 1988, p. 2–3.

[53]For example, Berklavs's three-page autobiography was published in *Literatūra un Māksla* on July 15, 1988.

[54]Jokovics, loc. cit.

[55]Personal communication by Professor of Law Ilmars Bišers of Riga.

[56]This euphoria was described in an official publication of the Riga Video Centre, *Ars*, Engl. ed., No. 12, 1988: "The energy of people was like dough: yes, God bless Latvia and be with us. It was only trust in the Almighty in this desperate outcry of the last hope. It was togetherness—a power one is suddenly aware of, Latvia's power. Power for Latvia. You cannot ask for love. You can ask for freedom."

[57]The idea of holding a church service in the Domas cathedral and broadcasting its proceedings was initiated by Rev. Juris Rubenis, who was also elected to the leadership of the People's Front (private communication by Rubenis).

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

background of the delegates was varied as well: 20 percent were engineers and mechanics; 16 percent were teachers and professors; another 16 percent were factory workers and drivers; 3 percent were journalists; another 3 percent were cultural workers; and 2 percent were artists.[58] As could be expected, the overwhelming number of participants were Latvians.

Among the achievements of the congress was the passage of several resolutions and the election of a Governing Council consisting of 100 representatives. The resolutions incorporated most of the ideas promoted by the creative unions in early June, but included several additions, among them a call for Latvian "economic sovereignty" within an integrated Baltic region and the abolition of all special privileges for high-ranking officials.[59] Soon after the congress, the Governing Council elected a 13-member board with Dainis Īvāns as president. They also elected chairmen for 19 specialized committees and an executive chairman.[60]

The proceedings of the congress were televised and precipitated bitter reactions from those comfortable with the status quo. Taking their cue from similar movements in Estonia, many opponents of the Latvian revival (mostly Russian speakers) banded together to create the Latvian International Working People's Front—or "Interfront"—to counter what they perceived to be aberrations from traditional party norms and previously "ideal" ethnic relations.[61]

Paradoxically the more active the Interfront became, the more it helped mobilize Latvians and other ethnic groups, especially in rural areas, to join the People's Front.[62] As one would expect, the two organizations have attracted support from different linguistic groups. A poll taken in late 1988 indicated that 48 percent of Russians in Latvia expressed a "need" for the Interfront, compared to 6 percent of Latvians. The People's Front enjoyed the support of 74 percent of all Latvians, but only of 10 percent of Russians in the republic.[63]

Early Challenges

One of the first challenges to be faced by the People's Front was dealing with Moscow's proposed constitutional amendments, published just two weeks after the Front's founding congress. The amendments envisaged a USSR Congress of People's Deputies with 2,250 members, 1,500 of whom would be elected by the people and 750 of whom would be elected by all-Union public organizations. This new congress would then elect from among its members a new Supreme Soviet consisting of a Council of the Union and a Council of Nationalities.

Many Latvian legal scholars, who were also Front members, found the very process of amending the constitution initiated by Soviet authorities to be undemocratic: the process had been hastily set into motion, without any substantial consultation with experts, and the membership of the committee charged with overlooking the process had been filled on an ad hoc basis. They also feared that the amendments would decrease the power of the individual republics. Not only were the republics going to lose their numerical representation in the Council of Nationalities, but, with the introduction of a two-tiered system of representation, the republics faced the very real risk of losing power in the real decision-making body, the new Supreme Soviet. Most important, the amendments implied that republics would lose their right of secession from the Union, because the new Congress of People's Deputies was to have power to make final decisions on all questions concerning the composition of the USSR. There were also questions as to what would be the consequences for the individual republics of the new right of the Congress's Presidium to declare martial law in specific localities or in the entire country, and of the USSR Supreme Soviet's right to determine the legal status of social organizations, presumably including that of the newly founded popular fronts.[64]

The Front's legal specialists, headed by Professor Ilmars Bišers, began an extensive campaign to alert Latvians to the dangers that the proposed changes held for the republic's sovereignty.[65] In a very short time the Presidium of the Latvian Supreme Soviet received 790,000 petitions and letters opposing the amend-

[58]Ojars J. Rozitis, "The Rise of Latvian Nationalism," *Swiss Review of World Affairs* (Zurich), February 1989, pp. 24–26; *Literatūra un Māksla*, Oct. 14, 1988; *Cīņa*, Oct. 9, 1988; and *Padomju Jaunatne*, Oct. 11,1988.

[59]*Padomju Jaunatne*, Oct. 19, 1988.

[60]Ibid., Oct. 28, 1988.

[61]The Riga Civil Aviation Engineering Institute appears to have become the cradle for the International Front. According to one of its spokesmen, four delegates had been sent from this school to the Founding Congress of the People's Front, but "at the Congress we had to experience more than one unpleasant incident. Others were also displeased with this venture. Then the formation of a new movement began randomly in many localities." On October 18, representatives of 153 firms and a total of 813 people assembled at the Institute, where a concrete decision about the necessity of creating the Latvian International Front was taken. *Cīņa*, Oct. 30, 1988. Latvians represent only 1.4 percent of the total enrollment of this Institute. *Latvijas PSR Tautu Forums...*, p. 36.

[62]Private communication from Ilmars Bišers.

[63]*Atmoda* (Riga), Jan. 16, 1989.

[64]*Padomju Jaunatne*, Nov. 19, 1988; *Literatūra un Māksla*, Nov. 4, 1988; and Saulius Girnius, "Baltic Condemnation of Proposed Changes to the Soviet Constitution," in RFE-RL, *Radio Free Europe Research*, Baltic Area Background Report No. 227, Nov. 17, 1988.

[65]Ilmars Bišers, "The Lessons of Half a Year," *Zvaigzne* (Riga), No. 4, February 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ments or proposing changes in them.[66] More important, at the initiative of the recently appointed Chairman of the Presidium of the Latvian Supreme Soviet, Anatolijs Gorbunovs, a small delegation traveled to Moscow to express their republic's concerns. Gorbunovs was so effective that two prominent Latvian jurists were asked to remain and work with the Moscow-based constitutional committee.[67]

Latvian lobbying efforts were successful in changing several points in the draft document. One of the most important changes introduced was the right of republics to secede from the USSR in practice as well as in theory.[68] However, according to Bišers, opportunities to exert a greater impact on the constitutional committee were lost because of the failure of the three Baltic republics to coordinate their efforts.[69]

The elections to the Congress of People's Deputies, held in the Spring of 1989, offered additional opportunity for the Front to extend its political influence. Its coordination and information efforts helped elect a majority of reformist candidates.[70] The message of strength sent to those who opposed the Latvian reawakening was unmistakable. For many in the Front leadership, however, this was only a successful rehearsal for the coming elections to the republic's Supreme Soviet.[71]

Greater Baltic solidarity and cooperation were forged at what has been considered a "historically significant" assembly of the leadership of the three Baltic popular fronts in Tallinn, May 13–14, 1989.[72] Among the many participants were representatives from almost all democratic movements and organizations in the USSR. Delegates from Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Finland, Sweden, and West Germany, as well as numerous foreign and Soviet correspondents, were witnesses to this "lesson in parliamentary discussions."[73]

The assembly produced seven radically worded and jointly signed declarations outlining the goals and orientations of the three movements. These declarations called for the implementation of genuine economic independence, the denunciation of Soviet policies in 1939 and 1940, and the denunciation of Stalinist genocide against the Baltic states. They were supplemented by promises of cooperation with other democratic movements of the USSR and by statements of concern for the Karabakh Committee, whose members had been arrested. A key declaration spelled out the Baltic states' "aspirations" for sovereignty in a "neutral and demilitarized Baltic-Scandinavia."[74]

The declarations represented the first agreement in Soviet history to be signed by independent groups from three Soviet republics without the participation of Moscow.[75] According to Esther Fein in the *The New York Times*, May 15, 1989, "the action taken today . . . marks the first time that these groups have appealed for an international forum to decide their status, basing their claims on the illegality of the Stalin-Hitler pact." The leader of the Latvian People's Front in his Tallinn speech minced no words in assessing the achievements of this Baltic Assembly:

We have built the foundations for a common Baltic home, the home we will build in the future; and with the documents approved today we have undermined the foundations of another dwelling; this dwelling is called totalitarian imperialism.[76]

A Soviet Doctor of Jurisprudence, Reyn Myullerson, implied in an article in *Pravda* that the Tallinn resolutions were aimed at the complete separation of the three republics from the Soviet Union.[77] His analysis was insightful.

Political Radicalization

The political program of the various organizations in Latvia became radicalized in late Spring of 1989. Setting the new tone was the Latvian National Indepen-

[66]Ibid.
[67]Ibid.
[68]*Globe and Mail*, Dec. 3, 1988.
[69]According to Bišers (in *Zvaigzne*), "We, the Baltic republics, which seemingly advanced the same proposals, each went on its own road, and that hurt us." Bišers felt that certain precipitous decisions by the Estonians concerning changing their own constitution with respect to the economy and natural resources vitiated the chances of greater progress in Moscow: "The Estonians made a series of changes in their constitution which do not conform to the USSR constitution. That in my opinion was not thought out, and it was received as an ultimatum." The result was official censure by Moscow, which had a fallout effect on agreements already under positive consideration. On the other hand, according to Bišers, the Estonian resolution on sovereignty and the Soviet Union was "much more constructive."
The Estonians, however, appeared disoriented when they chose not to vote for the resolution concerning changes in the USSR constitution proposed in the USSR Supreme Soviet by the Latvian Džemma Skulme.
[70]According to oral communications with People's Front representatives, more than three-quarters of those elected were reformists.
[71]This point was made in an interview by People's Front executive committee member Valdis Šteins in *Globe and Mail*, Apr. 5, 1989.
[72]*Padomju Jaunatne*, May 16, 1989.
[73]*Cīņa*, May 16, 1989.
[74]The declarations are published in their entirety in *Padomju Jaunatne*, May 25, 1988. A review of the assembly and the meaning of the declarations is provided in *Sovetskaya Molodezh'* (Riga), May 20, 1989. The full text of Russian-language declarations are printed in *Atmoda*, Russian ed., May 19, 1989.
[75]The Assembly has been accepted as an annual event. The next meeting is to be held in Riga "no later than May 1990." *Padomju Jaunatne*, May 25, 1989.
[76]Ibid., May 16, 1989.
[77]*Pravda* (Moscow), May 22, 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dence Movement. The organization had held its founding congress on February 18–19, 1989. On March 23, the Presidium of the Latvian Supreme Soviet declared certain parts of the Movement's program, statutes, and resolutions to be in conflict with the basic principles of the Latvian constitution. The Presidium asked that the points in question be resolved within two months or else the organization would be declared illegal.[78] The Movement called an extraordinary congress into session in Riga on May 28 to address these ultimatums. Although some cosmetic changes were introduced into the official documents of the Movement, delegates to the congress confirmed that the goal of their organization was Latvian independence.

The extraordinary congress received widespread radio and television coverage and extensive press reports and analysis of events were published. The Movement, which represents over 8,000 members, successfully demonstrated to the Latvian public that it was not made up of extremists and eccentrics but, rather, included some of the most prominent Latvian cultural personalities. One of its members was even a delegate to the USSR Congress of People's Deputies—Vilens Tolpežnikovs, an ethnic Russian who, two decades earlier, had been forced to relinquish his party membership for disagreeing with the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.[79]

Inspired by the articulate arguments of those attending this congress and the enthusiasm of several board members of the People's Front who had participated in the congress's deliberations, the entire board voted unanimously on May 31 to publish an appeal calling for a discussion of complete independence for Latvia. This appeal appeared on the front page of the June 2 issue of *Padomju Jaunatne* together with a preamble explaining the reasons for this serious step.

According to the appeal, Latvian attempts to find true accommodation for their republic within the Soviet federation were being stymied by very powerful centralizing political, economic, and ideological forces, as well as by reactionaries within the republic who were prepared to use brute force (as had been done in April in Tbilisi, Georgia) in order to maintain the status quo. The appeal also pointed out that the proceedings of the USSR Congress of People's Deputies highlighted the the tremendous gap that exists between what the conservative majority would allow and what the Latvian republic was demanding.

In its appeal, the board outlined broadly the essential prerequisites for an independent Latvian state. Among these prerequisites were: rule of law; equal rights for all national, social, and religious groups; "opportunity for broad spiritual and cultural development for all ethnic groups"; and economic growth. According to the board, independence was to be achieved through legal means—i.e., through parliamentary procedures initiated in accordance with the popular will. If self-determination of the Latvian people and their right to national independence could not be guaranteed by parliamentary measures, then other peaceful means were to be considered.

When the time came to vote on the appeal, several board members of the People's Front, among them the somewhat more conservative Ilmars Bišers and Mavriks Vulfsons, were in Moscow attending the Congress of People's Deputies. There is speculation now that had they not been caught unaware, they would have opposed such a radical resolution.[80] Bišers, for one, found the position taken in the appeal premature, because it made the Front an easy target for centralizers in Moscow and offered nothing concrete in real political terms.[81] Nevertheless, the 100-member Governing Council of People's Front ratified the board's appeal on June 10.[82] The ratification caught the Communist Party by surprise. Gorbunovs denounced the action, arguing that only the government had a right to initiate referenda and that the appeal went directly against the Front's own founding documents.[83]

The appeal found support among Latvia's professional unions. The Union of Latvian Artists passed a resolution on June 6, supporting complete economic and political independence. Somewhat later, the Council of the Union of Latvian Scientists and the Council of the Society of Latvian Doctors passed similar resolutions. It is interesting to note that despite growing support for independence in Latvia, the republic's central press did not carry any debates or discussions of the independence issue in June. It remained silent even after Īvāns, the President of the People's Front, announced at a June 14 calendar demonstration, which was televised, that independence was the sole solution to Latvia's problems.[84] By mid-July, however, discussions of the independence issue began to surface in the media with increasing frequency.

[78] *Dzimtenes Balss*, June 1, 1989.
[79] *Padomju Jaunatne*, May 30, 1989.
[80] *The Christian Science Monitor*, June 16, 1989.
[81] Based on the author's private communications.
[82] Dzintra Bungs, "Latvia in May, 1989: Thinking of Independence," in RFE-RL, *Radio Free Europe Research*, Baltic Area Situation Report No. 6, July 7, 1989.
[83] *Cīņa*, June 13, 1989.
[84] *Literatūra un Māksla*, June 24 and July 15, 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Impact

The Latvian reawakening has deeply affected many areas of life and changed old relationships. Without a doubt, its most significant impact has been to strengthen Latvian national consciousness and pride. The reintroduction of independent Latvia's national symbols; the rehabilitation of many formerly discredited authors, politicians, scientists, and other national figures; the reinterpretation of Latvian history—especially of the independence period; the public recognition of the sufferings of Latvian deportees in Siberia and of all those maligned by Stalin's system of terror; and hundreds of smaller developments all have created a Latvian population conscious of its own status as a recognized European nation with unquestionable rights to its own sovereign state.

While the legitimacy of Latvian nationhood has grown, the legitimacy of Soviet power among Latvians has plummeted, mostly due to revelations about the secret protocol to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and about the subsequent occupation and annexation of the Baltic republics. These revelations have amply demonstrated to middle-aged and younger generations the illegality of Soviet control over the republic and of policies of Sovietization. A further blow to Soviet legitimacy has been Latvian exposure to Western culture and its achievements (see below), which has called into question the credibility of Soviet boasts of economic, scientific, and other achievements. The closing in the summer of 1988 of most resort beaches in Jūrmala, the incredible bureaucratic bungling of the construction of even minimal purification devices for Riga, and the general lack of progress in solving acute air and water contamination problems throughout the republic have also served as powerful testimonials to the fact that the Soviet system does not work.[85]

Much of what remains of the Soviet system's legitimacy rests on the hope that Mikhail Gorbachev and his reformist supporters may introduce changes in the future. Paradoxically, many non-Latvians in the republic see the reformists and their political program as threatening the traditional—and for them comfortable—Soviet lifestyle and as posing the main threat to the legitimacy of the Soviet system. Not surprisingly, the Latvian Communist Party has strained to accommodate both its Latvian-oriented reformist members and its Russian-oriented traditionalists. Flare-ups between the two groups surfaced during selection of delegates for the 19th CPSU Conference and in the Latvian Communist Party's Central Committee plenum of June 18, 1988.[86]

The polarization within the Latvian Party may account for the October 1988 choice of Jānis Vāgris as First Secretary. Vāgris, an ethnic Latvian with a university education and a degree from the higher party school, is a relatively bland and unknown individual as compared to the popular candidates chosen in Estonia and Lithuania. In Latvia, one such "popular party personality" would have been Anatolijs Gorbunovs, the Secretary of Ideology, who has replaced Vāgris as Chairman of the Presidium of the Latvian Supreme Soviet. According to Paul Quinn-Judge of *The Christian Science Monitor*, who based his article on an interview with Peters, the process involved in the choice of Vāgris was as follows:

When the Latvian Central Committee convened last October to choose a new leader, Peters says he nominated Gorbunovs. But because Moscow had already put forward Vāgris' name, "party discipline prevailed."[87]

Interestingly, Peters admitted that he still "hopes and predicts" that Gorbunovs will take over the top party position in Latvia, despite the fact that members of the Interfront have clearly expressed their disapproval of Gorbunovs, and the Riga City Executive Committee—a stronghold of party traditionalists—has openly criticized him.[88]

Gorbunovs, an ethnic Latvian born in 1942 in the eastern part of Latvia who holds degrees from the Riga Polytechnical Institute in construction engineering and from the CPSU Central Committee's Academy of Social

[85]For example, Arvīds Ulme has entirely lost faith in the Soviet system and its ability to deal with environmental protection, and he feels that serious changes can come only after the introduction of a multiparty system. He raised this theme in a lecture tour throughout Canada and the US in May and June 1989.

[86]The transcript of the Latvian party plenum has been widely circulated in Riga. It indicates attacks by A. Rubiks (Chairman of the Riga City Executive Committee) and V. Sobolev (Second Party Secretary) on J. Leja (Chairman of the Latvian SSR TV and Radio Broadcasting Committee); by A. Drīzulis (Vice-President of the Latvian SSR Academy of Sciences) on Mavriks Vulfsons (TV commentator); and by F. Terehovs (First Secretary of the Party Committee of Riga's October District) on A. Gorbunovs (Secretary of Ideology). J. Dzenītis (Latvian SSR Public Procurator) decried the powers of the 3-4 journalists who "dictate the way we are to think." He asked in particular that Vulfsons be asked "what interests him more, capitalism or socialism" before being allowed on TV. The abridged transcript of the plenum has been published in *Baltic Forum*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1988.

[87]*The Christian Science Monitor*, Mar. 7, 1989.

[88]The party committee of the Civil Aviation Engineering Institute sent a resolution to the CPSU Politburo expressing "political distrust" of Gorbunovs. See *Cīņa*, Oct 30, 1988. During Interfront meetings, as well as at the May 4, 1989, meeting of the Latvian Central Committee, "calls were heard to remove Kezbers and Gorbunovs." *Padomju Jaunatne*, May 9, 1989. For criticism of Gorbunovs by the Riga City Executive Committee, see *Baltic Forum*, "Plenum Transcript," pp. 67–68.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Table 2: Popular Assessment of Performance and Trustworthiness of Selected Party and Government Leaders in Latvia

Responses to the question: "Please assess the performance of the following party and government leaders."

	Very positive	Positive	Negative & positive	Negative	Very negative	Cannot evaluate, insuf. info
Present leaders (in sequence listed)						
J. Vāgris (1st Party Secretary)	3.0	24.9	45.5	15.2	2.9	8.6
V. Sobolevs (2nd Party Secretary)	1.8	8.5	9.9	18.8	23.0	36.1
I. Kezbers (3rd Party Secretary)	11.0	32.9	20.6	8.9	2.3	22.1
A. Gorbunovs (Supreme Soviet Presidium Chair)	23.5	38.9	20.6	7.7	3.5	6.1
V. E. Bresis (Council of Ministers Chair)	1.4	16.3	34.0	12.5	3.0	30.2
A. Klaucens (Riga City 1st Party Secretary)	1.4	7.9	10.7	18.2	30.8	28.8
I. Prieditis (1st Secretary of Komsomol)	2.5	24.7	19.5	6.2	2.5	41.9
Former party first secretaries						
A. Pelše	0.6	1.3	7.3	17.0	59.6	13.4
A. Voss	0.3	1.1	6.9	20.4	63.7	6.6
B. Pugo	2.3	11.9	37.7	23.9	17.0	7.3

Responses to the question: "Please indicate to which of the republic's political leaders in your opinion you could state your views about the pace of restructuring, including critical comments, and be convinced that you would be properly understood."

	Yes, of course	Maybe yes	No	Hard to say
J. Vāgris	16.0	40.3	18.1	23,1
V. Sobolevs	6.9	11.4	45.2	32.5
I. Kezbers	29.9	28.8	12.1	25.3
A. Gorbunovs	47.5	28.5	10.3	12.2
V. E. Bresis	9.6	31.9	16.3	37.9
I. Prieditis	16.3	26.3	11.5	41.3
A. Zitmanis	1.7	9.1	27.6	56.2

SOURCE: *Atmoda* (Riga), Apr. 10, 1989.

Sciences, has been able to appeal to all ethnic groups in Latvia. A poll conducted by the People's Front Social Prognosis Committee shows him to be the preponderant favorite in terms of popularity, trustworthiness, and efficiency (see Table 2). Correspondent John Lloyd of *The Financial Times,* who has interviewed Gorbunovs, called him the "most important man in Latvia" because of his ability to balance the demands of the various factions and forces:

His importance lies not so much in his personality or convictions, but in the skill with which he can mediate between Latvian nationalism, the different currents within the Latvian Communist Party, the resentful and fearful Russians who live in Latvia, and the often conflicting messages coming from Moscow.[89]

The conflict within the party between reformers and their opponents has redefined the relationship between the majority of Latvians and segments of the Communist Party. No longer are party members automatically stigmatized as traitors. Party members such as Peters, Īvāns, and Gorbunovs articulate long-standing Latvian national aspirations and demands; it is not surprising, therefore, that a poll conducted by a Latvian youth magazine showed these three to be at the top of a list of "darlings" of 1988 that included many other party members as well.[90]

Latvians have now even accepted the necessity of having "their own" people in strategic political positions, as indicated by the election of so many reform-

[89] *The Financial Times* (London), May 8, 1989.

[90] *Liesma*, No. 1, January 1989. Four of the top five "darlings" are party members: Dainis Īvāns, President of the People's Front, Jānis Peters, poet and "godfather" of the People's Front; Edvīns Inkēns, TV journalist in charge of the controversial program "Good Evening in Latvia"; and Anatolijs Gorbunovs, Chairman of the Presidium of the Latvian Supreme Soviet.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

minded party members to the Congress of People's Deputies. Indicative of this acceptance and of the need for political moderation was the election of Vilnis Bresis by a preponderantly Latvian constituency. Bresis, a native Latvian born in 1930, holds higher degrees from the Academy of Agriculture and the Leningrad Higher Party School.[91] As Chairman of the Latvian SSR's Council of Ministers, he established his credibility among Latvian reformers in February 1989 by cutting short his vacation and returning to Riga in order to prevent attempts by conservatives in the Council to torpedo the law limiting the influx into Latvia of migrants from other republics.[92] Bresis won the election with a resounding majority of 68 percent against Juris Dobelis, member of the executive committee of the Movement for Latvian National Independence.[93]

The veritable mushrooming of independent societies, movements, and groups is another result of the national revival. No doubt, the visibility of certain informal groups, such as the human rights-oriented Helsinki '86, the Environmental Protection Club, and the Movement for Latvian National Independence has been high due to their participation in demonstrations and the formulation of radical demands. However, it may well be that the more institutionalized, low-profile organizations will change the system as much, if not more, than the "informals." Among them are the occupational associations, which have become true spokesmen for the interests of their members, sometimes even demanding revolutionary changes in their professions. There are also new boy scout organizations, Esperanto groups, charities, old-style Latvian student fraternities, and many types of civic organizations that did not exist even one year ago.

But the organizations with the greatest potential significance for the future are perhaps the new ones representing minority ethnic groups in the republic. The People's Front's initiation and support of Jewish, Polish, Ukrainian, Belorussian, Gypsy, and other cultural societies and clubs, and Interfront's snubbing of them has already caused fissures within the "Russian-speaking" group and has led to the formation of less homogenous and reactionary groupings within its ranks.[94] Given that Latvians represent only 50.7 percent of the total population, any alliances with minority ethnic groups are an important strategic gain. According to recent polls, however, over one-third of Latvia's non-Russian minorities—most probably those who have already assimilated to the Russian culture—are not enthusiastic supporters of independent initiatives by groups claiming to represent Latvia's national minorities.[95]

Freedom of the press is a cornerstone of true democracy and a bastion against totalitarianism. The majority of the media in Latvia are increasingly iconoclastic and are broadening the scope of their coverage, thus moving in the direction of unfettered expression, and in the process gaining credibility, respect, and a larger audience. The circulation of most newspapers has risen dramatically, as have the number of letters to the editor.[96] The Latvian youth newspaper *Padomju Jaunatne* tripled its incoming letters from 14,000 to over 50,000 between 1987 and 1989.[97] The drabness and uniformity that characterized media coverage for decades is now being replaced by a scintillating and variegated investigative reporting style that many in the party hierarchy find disturbing and intolerable.[98] However, the process of change has not affected all publications or newspapers equally. The Latvian-language media are much more favorably disposed to change than the Russian-language media.[99]

A marked polarization has occurred in the views of Latvian- and Russian-language newspaper readers. A poll taken in November 1988 showed that a majority of the readership of the republic's two leading Russian-language newspapers (*Sovetskaya Latviya* and *Sovetskaya Molodezh'*) considered the activities of "informal groups" in the republic damaging to interethnic relations; only one-third of Latvian newspaper readers (*Cīņa* and *Padomju Jaunatne)* felt the same way. Similarly, only 17 percent of the readers of *Sovetskaya Latviya* and 26 percent of the readers of *Sovetskaya Molodezh'*, as compared to 60 percent of the readers of *Cīņa* and 82 percent of *Padomju Jaunatne*, gave a positive evaluation of the activities of the creative

[91] *Padomju Jaunatne*, Oct. 11, 1988.

[92] Private communication.

[93] *Cīņa*, May 17, 1989. Dobelis received only 12.8 percent of the vote. He had been approached by the People's Front leadership not to run against Bresis, but he refused to drop out.

[94] The entire November 25, 1988, issue of *Literatūra un Māksla* was devoted to Jews in Latvia, in response to the creation of the Jewish Cultural Society. The cover featured a large star of David and a menora. By mid-April 1989, there were already 16 nationality societies. See ibid., Apr. 15, 1989.

[95] *Padomju Jaunatne*, Dec. 7, 1988.

[96] The most dramatic jump in circulation was in the case of the Russian-language youth newspaper in Latvia, *Sovetskaya Molodezh'*. Its circulation rose from 139,100 in 1987 to 325,000 in 1989. Only 40,000 new subscribers came from Latvia proper; the bulk of new readers came from other republics. It appears that the relative liberalism of this newspaper has created a specialized readership throughout the USSR. See *Cīņa*, May 9, 1989.

[97] Ibid.

[98] See ibid., Nov. 19, 1988; also Dzintra Bungs, "Towards Independent Journalism in Latvia?" RFE-RL, *Radio Free Europe Research*, Baltic Situation Report No. 3, March 16, 1989.

[99] *Cīņa*, May 9, 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

unions—which are most responsible for the current national awakening.[100]

Television has also undergone change and has had its impact on society. One program in particular, "Labvakar Latvijā" (Good Evening in Latvia), has held the attention not only of almost all Latvians since 1988, but also of a growing number of Russian speakers (Latvian programs have synchronized Russian dubbing). Its irreverent and investigative style of reporting, which resembles that of "60 Minutes" on the US national network CBS, has raised the critical consciousness of many previously apathetic individuals, and the ire of the old guard as well.[101]

Tolerance of pluralism has created more favorable conditions for religion. The mainstream press has carried numerous articles and interviews on religion, reflecting a budding interest in man's "spirituality." Bible studies have been introduced in certain schools, and Christmas and Easter are officially recognized once more, increasing the visibility of religion.[102] Young clergymen have successfully challenged and helped restructure a formerly moribund Lutheran Church.[103] A call this year to enroll in the Lutheran Seminary, published on the front page of *Padomju Jaunatne* and other periodicals, resulted in an exceptionally high number of applications.[104] The People's Front has emerged as a major source of support for freedom of conscience. Its religious publication, *Svētdienas Rīts* (Sunday Morning), is widely disseminated and complements the journals now published by the Lutheran and Catholic churches.[105]

Church-state relations are beginning to thaw, as indicated by the authorities' promise to return the Orthodox Cathedral in Riga—used for three decades as a science center—to its rightful purpose, and to begin once again church services at the rehabilitated Lutheran Cathedral.[106] All of these changes, however, do not alter the fact that the bulk of the Latvian population is not particularly religious. The growing interest and curiosity about religion remains unfocused and at times appears to be merely an outgrowth of the prevalent anti-establishment attitude of the people and a reaction to heavy-handed party campaigns promoting atheism.

Contacts and interaction with the West have also boomed, and have become a major factor in educating Latvians about alternative concepts of politics, economics, and human rights. Today, there exist virtually no restrictions on travel to capitalist countries by individuals visiting relatives or acquaintances who have provided sponsorship. Many choirs, theater groups, and scientific delegations have been on extensive tours in non-communist countries, often establishing close contacts with Latvian communities abroad. Cultural groups and individuals from the West have performed in Latvia. Programs and specialized congresses catering to "bourgeois" Latvian interests have been organized. Delegations of businessmen of Latvian origin have been received by government officials. Visiting Latvians from various walks of life and of different political persuasions have been interviewed in the media. Many articles, commentaries, and literary contributions by émigré Latvians are now frequently published in leading newspapers and journals.

Various leaders of the People's Front and of informal groups have traveled to Europe and North America, where their ideas have been exposed to a new dialectic of criticism and praise. This growing interaction with the West, however, has not pleased all Soviet organs equally. About two dozen delegates from the leadership of the People's Front who visited Latvian communities across North America in April 1989 were strip-searched on their return to Moscow, and all their notes, books, and foreign goods were confiscated. Only four individuals, all of them deputies to the USSR Congress of People's Deputies, enjoyed diplomatic immunity and were not searched.[107]

The psychological attitude of Latvians as a nation has very definitely improved, especially as fears of imminent assimilation have abated. A major step in con-

[100]Ibid.

[101]Dzintra Bungs, "Towards Independent Journalism," loc. cit.; and *Cīņa*, Nov. 19, 1988.

[102]First Deputy Minister of Education Biruta Kubuliņa pointed out in an interview the need for "religious history" in schools: "school today cannot isolate itself from the ethical and cultural values of the world that are found in the Bible. School children should very definitely know about them. They should know about the positive in the Bible and also about the unacceptable." *Atmoda*, Feb. 13, 1989. The rehabilitation of Christmas was reflected in an entire issue of ibid., Dec. 23, 1988.

[103]The religious movement "Atdzimsana un Atjaunosanas" (Rebirth and Renewal) and its supporters were able to elect a new archbishop, Karlis Gailitis (a graduate of the Latvian Agricultural Academy and member of the Latvian National Independence Movement), and introduce reformist policies at the Lutheran Synod meeting in Riga, April 11 and 12, 1989. See *Atmoda*, Apr. 30, 1989; and *Lauku Avize* (Riga), May 26, 1989.

[104]According to Rubenis, of the 52 serious applicants, 24 were accepted. (Private communication). The text of the call can be found in, among others, *Padomju Jaunatne*, Apr. 21, 1989; and *Svētdienas Rīts* (Riga), Apr. 30, 1989.

[105]The Lutheran journal *Ceļš* (Riga) and the Catholic *Katoļu Dzeive* (Riga) began publishing in 1989. See *Svētdienas Rīts*, Mar. 26, 1989.

[106]On January 20, 1989, a decision was made to allow the regular use of the Domas cathedral for church services and for "compatible" organ recitals. *Atmoda*, Feb. 6, 1989.

[107]The People's Front and the Latvian Association of Scientists sent protests to Moscow noting that this search contravened the spirit and letter of the Vienna Accords on human rights and negated all the assurances given to foreign media about real changes in human rights in the USSR. *Dzimtenes Balss*, May 4, 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

solidating the Latvian character of the republic has been the passing of a language law on May 5, 1989.[108] This law defines Latvian as the official language of the republic and requires that in three years, both Latvian and Russian be used by employees in government offices, stores, medical facilities, and other public services. Employees will be obliged to respond in the language in which clients and customers address them. Furthermore, in three years, all those wishing to graduate from secondary, secondary specialized, and higher educational institutions will have to pass a Latvian language examination (mandatory Russian-language examinations were already instituted throughout the USSR several years ago).[109] In view of the present language situation in the republic, the greatest adjustment to bilingualism will have to be made by Russian speakers. It may happen that as a result of this law out-migration of those unable or unwilling to cope with the new linguistic requirements will increase. The law may also discourage potential immigrants from other republics from settling in Latvia.

To be sure, the minoritization of Latvians within their own republic is still a very real possibility. In view of the low Latvian birth rate, the downward slide of the Latvian share of the republic's population becomes inevitable—unless in-migration can be reversed dramatically. Regulations to limit in-migration were passed in February 1989, but they were not comprehensive. The issue will become an increasingly controversial item on the political agenda until it is fully resolved. Until then, the question of in-migration will create further strains in nationality relations.

Even before the changes in language and immigration policies were effected, they aroused negative responses from large segments of the non-Latvian population. Under the leadership of the Interfront, these segments have shown their displeasure by mass rallies in February 1989 and calls for a general strike by industrial workers.[110] The organization of a strike was effectively quashed, but given that 62 percent of workers in industrial jobs are non-Latvian, the potential for serious confrontations in the future remains, and the threat of strike action alone sets limits on the range and pace of change open to the Latvian leadership.

Compared to Estonia and Lithuania, Latvia has been less daring in its pronouncements on sovereignty, partly for demographic reasons, but also due to fear that overly rapid or rash moves could endanger recent gains. The experience of the purges of 1959 weighs heavily in decisions regarding present and future strategies. At the same time, Latvia has not abandoned its goals for greater self-determination. Perhaps the best example of its new approach—a combination of caution with determination—is the draft law on constitutional amendments introduced on May 18, 1989.[111] While this law boldly defines the republic's competence in such sensitive areas as foreign relations, ratification of the USSR constitution, secession, and control of the republic's natural resources, an all-Union committee of top legal experts on the Soviet constitution was consulted before the draft document was published.[112]

Prospects

Unless the People's Front becomes incapacitated due to internal dissent and is forced to dissolve, it seems highly probable that a clear majority of delegates to the Latvian People's Congress of Deputies and the Latvian Supreme Soviet will be from the ranks of reformers. As yet, these reformers have not reached a consensus on whether to espouse a restructured federalism, confederation, or absolute independence. As noted, aspirations have been expressed by the People's Front and other groups for forming a demilitarized Baltic-Scandinavian region.[113] Clearly, the examples of Sweden and Finland are enticing to Latvians. On the other hand, the CPSU may eventually evolve in a different direction and offer new options. Peters, for one, predicts that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union will evolve toward "Eurocommunism" and then toward a Scandinavian type of social democracy.[114] Were this to happen, perhaps the prospects of remaining within the Union could grow more enticing for Latvians and other Soviet nationalities.

The economic factor may also have an impact on Latvia's future development. The republic's economy has performed at nearly the same sluggish pace as that of many other republics, and as a result, plans have been drawn up for instituting a system of local economic de-

[108] *Cīņa*, May 7, 1989.

[109] *Padomju Jaunatne*, Dec. 19, 1985. Mandatory oral exams in Russian for secondary school graduates were set for the spring of 1986.

[110] Mass rallies were organized in Riga by Interfront on February 23 and 25, 1989. *Literatūra un Māksla*, Mar. 4, 1989. The strike was to be held on April 28, but only a few groups participated. Foremost among them were dockworkers from Riga.

[111] *Cīņa*, May 21, 1989.

[112] Ibid., May 25, 1989. The proposed Latvian constitutional changes replicate the two-tier system of elections in the USSR, which in fact was heavily criticized at the time by Latvian judicial experts. Lithuania and Estonia have direct elections for the Supreme Soviet.

[113] *Padomju Jaunatne*, May 25, 1989.

[114] *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 7, 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cision-making by January 1990.[115] Baltic proposals for introducing cost accounting and economic sovereignty to the region were ratified by the USSR Supreme Soviet on July 27. Latvia received official approval for implementing cost accounting, but did not gain the economic independence given to Estonia and Lithuania. It appears that Latvian proposals for economic autonomy arrived too late to be considered at this session of the USSR Supreme Soviet.[116]

To what extent this will change Latvia's economic situation remains to be seen. Should economic performance fail to improve substantially, pressures for a final rupture with the USSR could grow within Latvia. In all probability, however, Latvia's two decades of experience as an independent state and the success of Finland—a state whose development in the past was similar to its own—would serve to allay any doubts about the economic viability of an independent Latvian state.

A potential coalition of reform-minded leaders of Soviet republics could also become a determinant of Latvia's development. Together, the Baltic republics have a disproportionate impact on the evolution of changes in the USSR. The popular fronts and the media in these three republics have become role models for those in other republics. Baltic informal organizations have taken the lead in the coordination of democratic and independence movements elsewhere in the Soviet Union.[117] The delegates these organizations elected to the USSR Congress of People's Deputies (some of whom were in turn elected to the USSR Supreme Soviet) have been predominantly outspoken reformers, willing to raise uncomfortable questions and venture forth with far-reaching propositions. If in the future these deputies are able to forge an alliance with like-minded deputies from other republics, they could form a cohesive, politically powerful force within the Soviet Union.

Finally, the West and various international organizations could undoubtedly play a significant role in Latvia's future, mostly by recognizing and supporting a larger degree of freedom in Latvia. Yet, the West could find itself in a quandary with regard to some future Latvian solutions. For example, were Latvia to chose to remain within the Soviet Union, but gain sufficient autonomy to demand membership in the United Nations and UNESCO, recognition of its sovereignty, and the opening of its embassies across the world, the West would have to decide whether or not to meet these demands—or more precisely, whether it can deem anything short of separation from the USSR as sufficient for granting renewed de jure recognition of Latvia.

Of course, all such speculations hinge on Moscow's perception of and reaction to developments in Latvia and the other Baltic republics, as well as on future changes within the Soviet hierarchy of power. Sudden reversals in the direction of reform cannot be ruled out. A return to previous policies of repression and homogeneity may appear improbable today, but, as events at China's Tienanmin Square have shown us, communist authorities can initiate repressions swiftly and unexpectedly. Today, Moscow reformers applaud the reform efforts in Latvia, but their enthusiasm may waver if Latvia decides to secede from the USSR. The dissolution of empires and territories has always tended to strengthen impulses that were based on emotion rather than rationality. Then again, many empires have been dissolved since World War II, despite the initial reluctance and opposition of their rulers. And, in the long run, the break-up has benefited these rulers. Perhaps some Russian intellectuals have already begun to study the benefits of a break-up of the Soviet empire, and to see the potential of a reborn Russian state, strengthened by bonds of internal solidarity and commitment, which would still remain a very large country with substantial natural resources.

The freedoms Latvians enjoy today have flourished mostly due to Gorbachev and his tolerant policies. As one Latvian intellectual has noted: "We can speak so freely and openly about complicated matters, as is being done in this meeting, because these rights have been given us."[118] Yet, there is always the danger of Gorbachev's ouster as leader of the Soviet Union. The quandary facing Latvians during their reawakening is how to control the speed and extent of changes in Latvia so as to avoid provoking a conservative backlash against current liberalization policies and the ascendancy of a new strong man in the Kremlin whose democratic instincts may not be equal to those of Gorbachev.

[115]The joint Baltic economic cooperation plan was drafted Sept. 21–23, 1988. *Padomju Jaunatne,* Oct. 19, 1988.

[116]*Globe and Mail,* July 28, 1989.

[117]See Bohdan Nahaylo, "Baltic Echoes in Ukraine," *Report on the USSR,* Jan. 13, 1989; and Vladimir Socor, "Soviet Moldavian Writers Publish Unauthorized Periodical in Latin Script with help from Latvia," RFE-RL, *Radio Free Europe Research,* Mar. 30, 1989.

[118]*Literatūra un Māksla,* Mar. 18, 1988.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New Soviet ethnic politics, clockwise from above: Latvians demonstrating at Riga's Freedom Monument on the 1988 anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact declare "Close the Borders to Newcomers"; Lithuanian Communist chief Algirdas Brazauskas with Vytautas Landsbergis, President of Sąjūdis at an October 29, 1988, ceremony reinstating the Lithuanian National flag; the Latvian Environmental Protection Club stages a "funeral" for the polluted Baltic Sea; Belorussian soldiers at the second General Diet of republic youth organizations, in Vilnius, Lithuania, in January 1989; an electoral motorcade in Vilnius in March 1989 proclaims: "For Sąjūdis, for Lithuania!"

—Juris Taškovs, Kęstutis Svėrys, Taškovs, from Jan Zaprudnik, Lithuanian Information Center.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gorbachev and Russian Orthodoxy

John B. Dunlop

In late April 1988, General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev received the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Pimen, and the permanent members of the Holy Synod at a meeting in the Kremlin that was widely reported in the Soviet media. The reception represented the first public encounter of a Soviet party leader with bishops of the Russian Church since the Moscow Patriarchate was revived during World War II. In his remarks, Gorbachev made explicit reference to the Church's support for the Soviet Union's wartime effort and implied that his policy of *perestroyka* was the moral equivalent of that military defense of the homeland. Gorbachev promised that henceforth religious believers would be treated with respect in the Soviet Union. "Believers," he declared, "are Soviet people, working people, patriots, and they have the full right to express their opinions with dignity."[1]

On June 11, then-president Andrey Gromyko spoke approvingly of the historical role of the Russian Church in an address at the USSR Supreme Soviet, delivered to participants in the celebration of the 1000th anniversary of the baptism of Kievan Rus'.[2] On the previous day, the Soviet state's celebration of the Millennium had been held at the Bol'shoy Theater in Moscow. Although the official government representation was intentionally kept at a low level (two candidate members of the Politburo, the minister of culture, and the chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs [CRA]), the presence of Raisa Gorbacheva sent a special message to those watching the festivities on Soviet television. The high point of the evening, according to Western witnesses, was a spirited and moving reading by the well-known actor and film director Sergey Bondarchuk of the account of the conversion of Rus' in the year 988 recorded by the monk Nestor in *The Tale of Bygone Years*.[3]

Reflecting on these unprecedented happenings, Soviet journalist Aleksandr Nezhnyy enthused on the pages of *Moscow News*:

Who would have guessed church service singing from the Millennium would be broadcast throughout the country from the Bol'shoy Theater, that millions of TV viewers would see the documentary film "The Church," or that Andrey Gromyko, President of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, at a meeting with members of the Russian Orthodox Church, would emphasize the outstanding importance of Christianity in the life of our Motherland?[4]

John B. Dunlop is Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, Stanford University (Stanford, CA) and a participant in the institution's John M. Olin Program for Soviet and East European Studies. *The author wishes to thank Father Victor Potapov of Voice of America for helpful documentary material and Jane Ellis of Keston College for her comments on a preliminary draft of this essay.*

[1]See "The Meeting of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, M. S. Gorbachev, with the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus', Pimen, and Members of the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church," *Pravda* (Moscow), Apr. 30, 1988.

[2]See "On the Occasion of a Historic Date," *Izvestiya* (Moscow), June 12, 1988.

[3]Father Victor Potapov, Voice of America, "Khronika Prazdnovaniya Tysyacheletiya Kreshcheniya Rusi v SSSR" (A Chronicle of the Celebration in the USSR of the 1000th Anniversary of the Baptism of Rus'), unpublished manuscript.

[4]Alexander Nezhnyy, "The Millennium," *Moscow News*, No. 25, 1988, p. 16. It should be noted that Soviet citizens are not able to subscribe to *Moscow News*. In 1988, out of a total print run of about 1 million, only 250,000 copies were published in Russian. (On this, see Ulrich Meister, "Glasnost and the Soviet Press," *Swiss Review of World Affairs* (Zurich), July, 1988, p. 30.) For other reports on the Millennium celebrations, see "Documents of the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, Trinity-Sergius Lavra, June 6–9, 1988," *Zhurnal Moskovskoy Patriarkhii* (Moscow), No. 8, 1988, pp. 2–24; Helen Bell and Jane Ellis, "The Millennium Celebrations of 1988 in the USSR," *Religion in Communist Lands* (Keston, Kent), Winter 1988, pp. 292–328; and "Holy Russia's Millennium," *The Economist* (London), Apr. 2, 1988, pp. 17–19.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

These dramatic gestures by the General Secretary and the former Soviet President have been matched, and perhaps surpassed, by other developments and events. For example, on May 26, 1988, "a solemn handing over of holy relics" took place in the Moscow Kremlin whereby the relics of Orthodox saints in the museums of the Kremlin were given for safekeeping to five metropolitans of the Orthodox Church.[5] This extraordinary gesture, which was reported on the pages of *Izvestiya* and shown on Soviet television, effectively cancelled the decree of August 1920, which had mandated "the complete liquidation of the cult of corpses and mummies."[6]

The Gorbachevite press began publishing unprecedentedly favorable articles about believers. For example, the large-format weekly *Ogonek* carried a spread of color photographs devoted to the hard-working Orthodox nuns of the Holy Mountain Convent in Estonia, accompanied by an admiring commentary written by journalist Aleksandr Nezhnyy.[7] An equally enthusiastic report on the 148 Orthodox nuns of Pukhtitsa Convent, also located in Estonia, appeared in the No. 3, 1988, issue of the anti-religious monthly *Nauka i Religiya*.[8]

Izvestiya sang the praises of Father Mark, the assistant head librarian of the Danilov Monastery in Moscow, a youthful former worker who had converted to Orthodoxy as a result of an interest in church music.[9] *Nedelya, the weekly supplement to Izvestiya,* featured a wide-ranging discussion with priest-monk Innokentiy Pavlov, an instructor at the Leningrad Theological Seminary.[10] The literary weekly, *Knizhnoye Obozreniye,* published a full-page interview with archpriest Pavel Nedosekin, an instructor at the Orthodox theological seminary in Zagorsk.[11] And *Moscow News* carried a lengthy interview with Father Boris Nichiporov, a priest serving in Kalinin oblast, who was described as an adult convert to Orthodoxy with a degree in psychology from Moscow State University.[12] The featured clergy all came across as attractive and cultivated people, interested in current events and in the life of the mind.

In May 1988, *Literaturnaya Gazeta* published an interview with two former deputy chairmen of the Council for Religious Affairs, Makhmud Rakhmankulov, a specialist in Muslim affairs, and Petr Makartsev, who specializes in the Orthodox Church.[13] Both officials assailed serious errors in the treatment of Soviet religious believers—Rakhmankulov noting that unregistered mullahs and mosques in Central Asia and the Caucasus outnumbered registered ones, and Makartsev complaining indignantly about official attempts to suppress Orthodox monasticism.

This surprisingly favorable treatment of religious believers by the Soviet media has been accompanied by some impressive improvements in the position of religious organizations. The Russian Orthodox Church, for example, has been permitted to reopen at least three monasteries, and, in 1988 alone, it was allowed to open 500–700 churches. On the occasion of the Millennium, the Orthodox Church was permitted to import some 1.2 million Bibles in Russian and Ukrainian.[14]

---

[5]See *Izvestiya,* May 28, 1988.

[6]See Dimitry Pospielovsky, *The Russian Church under the Soviet Regime, 1917–1982,* Vol. 1, Crestwood, NY, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984, p. 39.

[7]Aleksandr Nezhnyy, photos by Anatoliy Goryanov, "The View from Holy Mountain," *Ogonek,* No. 23, 1988, p. 17, and photo insert pages.

[8]See Yu. Kuz'mina, "She Went into a Convent . . . ," *Nauka i Religiya* (Moscow), No. 3, 1988, pp. 45–48.

[9]"Father Mark Reads and Writes," *Izvestiya,* June 5, 1988.

[10]"The Time Is Auspicious," *Nedelya* (Moscow), No. 21, 1988, pp. 18–20.

[11]"The Continuity of Culture, and Morality," *Knizhnoye Obozreniye* (Moscow), No. 24, June 10, 1988, p. 10.

[12]"A Talk with a Priest," *Moscow News,* No. 23, 1988, p. 16.

[13]"The New Thinking and Freedom of Conscience," *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (Moscow), May 18, 1988, p. 10.

[14]There are major discrepancies among the figures provided by various Moscow Patriarchate hierarchs, the Council for Religious Affairs, and the Soviet press. Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Belorussia, head of the church's Department of External Ecclesiastical Affairs, has reported that 697 formerly closed Orthodox churches were permitted to resume operations during 1988 ("The Time of *Glasnost'* Is Ripe," *Argumenty i Fakty* [Moscow], No. 1, 1989, pp. 4–5). Konstantin Kharchev, chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs, provided a figure of "more than 500" for the year 1988 in an interview published in December 1988 ("The Law and Conscience," *Ogonek,* No. 50, 1988, p. 3); Kharchev stated that only 16 new Orthodox churches had been registered in 1987. *Izvestiya* has reported that more than 430 of the newly opened Orthodox churches are located in Ukraine ("Bells over the Desna," *Izvestiya,* Feb. 1, 1989, p. 6). Metropolitan Vladimir of Rostov and Novocherkassk, Chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate, has recently reported that in the period between late April 1988 and late April 1989, "more than 1,700 [Orthodox] parishes" were opened (*Izvestiya,* Apr. 29, 1989, p. 3). *Moscow News* (No. 15, 1989, p. 8) has provided a figure of 1,244 new Orthodox parishes for the same period, while Metropolitan Pitirim of Volokolamsk and Yur'yev has given a lower figure of 1,002 (*Sovetskaya Kul'tura* [Moscow], Mar. 23, 1989, p. 6). *Nedelya* has provided a figure of "about 1,500" Orthodox churches for the same period but notes that there are presently "about 18,000 inactive cult buildings" for all religious denominations in the USSR (*Nedelya,* No. 26, 1989). During a June 1989 visit to Moscow, I was told by Aleksandr Ogorodnikov, editor of the *samizdat Bulletin of Christian Social Opinion* (*Byulleten' Khristyanskoy Obshchestvennosti*), that his organization has only been able to document the opening of 500 Orthodox churches under Gorbachev. As for monasteries, three have definitely been opened: Optina Pustyn', the Tolgskiy Convent, and a small part (3.5 of 28 hectares) of the Kiev Monastery of the Caves. *Moscow News* (No. 15, 1989, p. 8) has reported that an additional three Orthodox monasteries have been permitted to open, but there has as yet been no confirmation of this from other sources.

The figure on the number of Bibles imported from the West is given by Kharchev in the interview appearing in the No. 50, 1988, issue of *Ogonek.* During a visit to Israel, the distinguished Soviet philologist and translator Sergey Averintsev revealed that he would be preparing an edition of the New Testament for serialized publication in the monthly *V Mire Knig.* In late 1988, the journal published selections from the Gospel of St. Matthew (Igor Vinogradov, "A Nocturne for Two Voices," *Moscow News,* No. 2, 1989, p. 11). While no further selections have appeared since the end of 1988, the No. 4, 1989, issue of *V Mire Knig* reported that the publishing house Politizdat was planning a seven-volume edition of the Bible with commentary by experts on scientific atheism.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How does the Gorbachev leadership see the relationship between an avowedly atheistic state and its religious citizens? What prompted a review of policy toward the legal church institutions in the USSR, and what are its results? This article will focus on the changes in terms of the effect they have had on the largest and politically most significant religious body in the Soviet Union, the Russian Orthodox Church.

New Thinking on Religion

It appeared at first that the approach of the new Gorbachev leadership to religion would be basically to tighten the screws. The Party Statute adopted at the 27th Party Congress in early 1986 affirmed the obligation of all party members "to carry out a decisive struggle . . . with religious prejudices and other views and customs that are foreign to the socialist way of life."[15] The Congress urged an increased use of "individual work with believers," which translated into singling out religious individuals for criticism and humiliation at public meetings, for visits by atheist activists at their homes, etc.[16]

An example of how this intensified anti-religious activity was to be conducted is found in the report of I. Zhuravlev, head of the agitation and propaganda department of the Tambov oblast party committee (*obkom*), which was published in a volume entitled *Perestroyka* in 1987. In this report, Zhuravlev noted with pride that 1,500 anti-religious agitators (*agitatory*) had been enlisted to carry out "individual work with believers" in the oblast; that more than 900 atheist lecturers were hard at work; and that the oblast could boast of 380 clubs for young atheists. Especially intensive anti-religious work was being conducted among pensioners, who were described as being particularly susceptible to the seduction of religion.[17]

The Soviet press in this early period was busily debunking the upcoming celebration of the Millennium.[18] In early 1987, in a speech to the USSR Academy of Sciences, party propaganda chief Aleksandr Yakovlev castigated all "attempts to depict Christianity as the 'mother' of Russian culture . . . ."[19] And in a speech published in mid-1987, Yakovlev underlined his belief that nationalism and religio-nationalism constituted the greatest danger for contemporary Soviet society.[20] Yet, by the end of 1987, this vigorous anti-religious approach was abandoned by Gorbachev.

There is evidence to suggest that Gorbachev personally sought to improve his standing with Russian Orthodox believers soon after assuming the post of general secretary. In May 1985, for example, the new administrative center of the Moscow Patriarchate, the Danilov Monastery, which had been returned to the Church under Yuriy Andropov in 1983, was permitted to begin ringing its church bells.[21] This concession encouraged other parishes to press for the right to ring their bells.

At the beginning of 1986, two tangible privileges were granted to the Russian Orthodox Church. The No. 1, 1986, issue of *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* announced that henceforth, Orthodox priests would not need permission from local soviets to visit "seriously ill" parishioners in their homes, in homes for the elderly, or in penal institutions.[22] Although it is unclear how widely the new practice has been instituted—the heads of hospitals, prisons, and homes for the elderly are still able to deny access to clergy, if they so choose—this concession signaled that the feelings of believers mattered. The same issue of the *Journal* announced that religious organizations would have the status of "legal entities." This means that religious associations would be able to take their grievances to Soviet courts and that the publishing department of the church could, for example, purchase paper for its journals legally. In this case, too, it is unclear to what degree the new status would change the existing situation.

In 1987, the Gorbachevite press began a campaign against the abuse of believers' legal rights. In its No. 13, 1987, issue, for example, *Ogonek* reported at length on

[15]See *Ustav Kommunisticheskoy Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza* (Statute of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union), Moscow, Izdatel'stvo Politicheskoy Literatury, 1986.

[16]I. Zhuravlev, "Establishing Atheistic Convictions," in *Perestroyka: problemy, poiski, nakhodki* (*Perestroyka:* Problems, Quests, Discoveries), Moscow, Izdatel'stvo Politicheskoy Literatury, 1987, pp. 197–98.

[17]Ibid., pp. 197–201.

[18]William van den Bercken, "Soviet Ideological Reactions to the Millennium of Christianity in Russia," paper presented at an international conference on "Christianity in the Eastern Slav Lands," held in London July 12–14, 1988. The conference was sponsored jointly by the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at the University of London and Keston College.

[19]A. N. Yakovlev, "The Achievement of a Qualitatively New Condition of Soviet Society, and the Social Sciences," *Vestnik Akademii Nauk SSSR* (Moscow), No. 6, 1987, p. 69.

[20]Aleksandr Yakovlev, "*Perestroyka* and Morality," *Moscow News*, No. 31, 1987, insert supplement, p. 5.

[21]See Natalya Davydova, "Church Bells," *Moscow News*, No. 15, 1988, p. 14. On the Danilov Monastery, see Sophie Quinn-Judge, "Resurrection of a Russian Monastery," *The Christian Science Monitor* (Boston), Feb. 17, 1988.

[22]See "The Rights and Obligations of a Religious Society," *Zhurnal Moskovskoy Patriarkhii*, No. 1, 1986, appendix. Formerly, the authorities had routinely withheld such permission, with the result that believers died without the consolation of the last rites, a practice that understandably served to alienate their friends and relatives from officialdom.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the painful restrictions on Orthodox parish life in Krasnodar Region.[23] Parish communities were reportedly not permitted to carry out necessary repairs on their churches, with the result that many of the churches in the diocese were in a dangerously dilapidated condition. Nevertheless, the diocese had donated 600,000 rubles to the Soviet Peace Fund. Citing Karl Marx, the author of the article declared that "coercive means against religion are senseless."

Similarly, the No. 33, 1987, issue of *Moscow News* carried an article entitled "Law and Conscience," by Aleksandr Nezhnyy, which described the excruciating 25-year-long struggle of believers in the city of Kirov, which has a population of 400,000, to obtain the opening of a second Orthodox church. In July 1987, Kirov believers sent their 42nd complaint to the Procurator General of the USSR, and 2,000 of them signed a letter requesting help from *Moscow News*. Nezhnyy showed local officials in Kirov to be callously indifferent to the needs of the believers.[24]

In the summer of 1987, another practice that had served to anger believers was struck down. The journal *Sovetskaya Yustitsiya* carried a declaration by an official of the Council for Religious Affairs to the effect that the registration by civil authorities of baptisms and church weddings was illegal because it violated the separation of the church from the state.[25] The registration carried the risk for believers who baptized their children or who were married by a priest of being fired or demoted at work, not receiving a new apartment, not being admitted to an educational institute, and so forth. For party members, obliged by the Party Statute to combat religion, it often meant expulsion from the party. (There is evidence, however, that local officials are currently getting around this prohibition by demanding that those seeking a church wedding or baptism present birth certificates instead of internal passports!)

These discussions in the press and concessions to the Russian Orthodox Church helped prepare the ground for the major changes that took place in 1988, the year of the Millennium celebrations. They were preceded by the application of "new thinking" to Soviet anti-religious propaganda, which was under the supervision of Aleksandr Yakovlev. The first significant fruit of this new thinking was contained in the No. 11, 1987, issue of *Nauka i Religiya*, which published a pioneering interview with the then-CRA Chairman Konstantin Kharchev and "think pieces" by anti-religious specialists Lev Mitrokhin and V. Pravotorov.[26]

But the definitive word was spoken in an unsigned article—i.e., an editorial—entitled "Socialism and Religion," which appeared in the No. 4, 1988, issue of the party's theoretical journal, *Kommunist*.[27] Purporting to be a scholarly study of the Bolshevik regime's approach to religion from 1917 through 1987, the article also articulated guidelines for the future. The article clearly had Yakovlev's approval, and Gorbachev probably scrutinized it as well.

The article makes clear at the outset that the goal of the Communist Party continues to be the complete disappearance of religion in the Soviet Union, or, as the text puts it, "their [i.e., believers'] full transition in the future to a position of materialism." Each communist has the "unalterable obligation" actively to disseminate the dialectical-materialist world-view and seek its triumph.

But there remains the question of how this goal is to be achieved. Lenin, the article notes, emphasized that a struggle with religion was necessary, but he also stressed the critical importance of appropriate tactics. It is time, *Kommunist* stated, to desist from crude and counterproductive harassment of religious believers in the Soviet Union:

> *The matter consists in spreading the new thinking to the whole sphere of the study of religion and of atheistic upbringing, overcoming once and for all dogmatism, primitivism, and the reliance on the administrative-bureaucratic style, as well as overcoming all sorts of leftism leading to manifestations of atheistic sectarianism and, what is more, to violations of the law . . . .*

Religious believers, the editorial says, must be drawn into the social life of the USSR, must come to identify with Soviet society so that their sense of alienation disappears and they gradually free themselves of religion and become convinced dialectical materialists. "Of course," it continues, "there still exists a contradiction between a growth in social activity by a believer and the

[23]Sergey Vlasov, "If One Reasons In Human Fashion . . . ," *Ogonek*, No. 13, 1987, pp. 30–31.

[24]Aleksandr Nezhnyy, "Law and Conscience," *Moscow News*, No. 33, 1987, p. 13.

[25]"Concerning the Free Observance of Religious Rites," *Sovetskaya Yustitsiya* (Moscow), No. 16, 1987, p. 9. Whether from passport or birth certificate, the local church warden (*starosta*) is able to identify those being baptized and married and pass the information along to the authorities.

[26]V. Pravotorov, "The Greatest Mistake," *Nauka i Religiya*, No. 11, 1987, pp. 19–20; and L. Mitrokhin, "Socialist Reality and Religion," ibid., pp. 40–43. Mitrokhin cites Aleksandr Yakovlev as an authority on p. 43. Yuriy Khristoradnov, former First Secretary of the Gor'kiy *obkom*, replaced Kharchev as Chairman of the CRA in mid-1989. Orthodox clergy and laity with whom I spoke during my visit to the Soviet Union in June 1989 expressed strong reservations about the choice of Khristoradnov, who is not regarded as an improvement over Kharchev. He could, they said, be worse.

[27]"Socialism and Religion," *Kommunist* (Moscow), No. 4, 1988, pp. 115–23.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

religious elements of his world-view: this contradiction is resolvable in the historical perspective by broadening his participation at work and in the life of society and the state, by raising the level of culture, and through the moral influence of the collective." More emphasis must also be placed on communist "spirituality," which will facilitate the waning of religious influences.

Kommunist underlines that the co-optation of religious bodies in the Soviet Union greatly facilitates the dying out of religion: ". . . the churches existing in the USSR seek out in the fund of their spiritual values that which corresponds to the humane ideals of socialism, manifesting not only loyalty but also solidarity with the programmatic postulates of Soviet society . . . ." The article admits that much remains to be accomplished, including a "basic restructuring" of anti-religious propaganda, using the mass media more effectively, improving existing Soviet legislation on religious associations, and raising the responsibility and authority of the Council for Religious Affairs in resolving disputes between local authorities and religious associations.

Beneath the veneer of scholarly detachment, the *Kommunist* editorial manifests a principled commitment to achieving the eradication of religion in the Soviet Union. The vigorous anti-religious efforts of the League of Militant Godless in the 1920's and 1930's are endorsed, and Stalin is at one point criticized for neglecting atheistic propaganda in the postwar period! Nikita Khrushchev's assault on religion during 1959–64 is also implicitly approved. What the article advocates, therefore, is a transition from crude anti-religious propaganda that alienates millions of believers from the Soviet system to a subtle anti-religious approach that turns believers into atheists without their being aware of the transformation.

As a footnote, one should point out that the Old Bolshevik and People's Commissar for Enlightenment, Anatoliy Lunacharskiy, is—along with Marx, Engels, and Lenin—cited as an authority in the *Kommunist* article. In fact, one senses Lunacharskiy's influence at work throughout. The laconic title "Socialism and Religion" recalls, and is presumably intended to recall, Lunacharskiy's well-known study, *Religion and Socialism*.[28] Lunacharskiy's belief that the energy of religion must be transformed into a "religion without God" and "religious atheism," and his cautioning against the use of force to eradicate religion[29] is echoed in the article. However, because Lenin sharply criticized Lunacharskiy's "God-building" theories, the *Kommunist* article is discreet about acknowledging its debt to Lunacharskiy.

That *Kommunist*'s program for dealing with religion was also Gorbachev's was made clear during the General Secretary's highly-publicized meeting with Patriarch Pimen in April 1988. On this occasion, Gorbachev warmly praised religious associations in the USSR for their "contribution to the struggle for nuclear disarmament" and for their "support of the domestic and foreign policies of the Soviet government." Such a position, he declared, "meets with understanding in the whole of our society."[30]

The future unity of Soviet citizens would, Gorbachev predicted, be achieved through "a broad public dialogue, a more active participation by religious figures in the work of such social formations as the Cultural Foundation, the V. I. Lenin Children's Fund, the 'Homeland' [*Rodina*] society and others." He then proceeded to call for the full integration of believers into Soviet society, for "the strengthening of the unity of all workers, of our whole people." And he proclaimed: "We have a common history, one Fatherland, and one future."

In similar fashion, in his June 11, 1988, address to participants in the Millennium celebrations, then-President Gromyko showed that he fully agreed with the approach to religion outlined in *Kommunist*. The Russian Orthodox Church and other religious bodies were praised by Gromyko for their "active efforts, which correspond to the high criteria of Soviet patriotism," on behalf of peace. Religious associations in the USSR were lauded for their "contributions to various voluntary funds, directed toward the preservation of peace, toward the defense of children, the development of culture, and the restoration of monuments of antiquity." In response to a question from a member of the audience, Gromyko stated that he was in favor of permitting the church to engage in charitable work.[31]

The new approach to religion sketched out in *Kommunist* was elaborated upon in *Nauka i Religiya*. An unsigned article appearing in the No. 6, 1988, issue articulated the new line on the disappearance of religion from the USSR: "The future of the church? For adherents of scientific atheism everything would appear to be clear. With the growth of socialism, religion will die out, and that means that the church, too, will die out . . . . But when and how this will occur—hardly any serious

[28]A. V. Lunacharskiy, *Religiya i Sotsializm* (Religion and Socialism), 2 vols., St. Petersburg, Shipovnik, 1908 and 1911.

[29]On this, see Jutta Scherrer, "The Crisis of the Marxist Intelligentsia Before 1914: A. V. Lunacharskiy and Bogostroitel'stvo," *Revue des Études Slaves* (Paris), Vol. 51, Nos. 1-2, 1978, pp. 207–15.

[30]*Pravda*, Apr. 30, 1988.

[31]*Izvestiya*, June 12, 1988; and "President Andrey Gromyko Receives the Participants in the Celebration of the Millennium of the Baptism of Rus' at the Moscow Kremlin on June 11, 1988," *Press Release* [of the Moscow Patriarchate], English edition, No. 10, June 12, 1988, p. 2.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

researcher would attempt to provide answers to such questions today."

What could be said definitely, the *Nauka i Religiya* editorial continued, was that atheistic work had to be completely overhauled:

It can and must be carried out with respect for the feelings of believers and for the public dignity of clergy; it must more and more take the form of a dialogue and of open discussion in which the truth will emerge. Cooperation in the economic field, in social activity, in the struggle for the humanization of interpersonal relations, in increasing the well-being and might of the Fatherland, in strengthening peace, while at the same time carrying out a principled dialogue on the level of worldviews—this is how we see the future relations between atheists and believers.[32]

Other articles in *Nauka i Religiya* indicated how such a "dialogue" between atheists and believers was to be conducted. For example, the No. 1, 1988, issue published the response of several Orthodox priests to a question about the sacrament of confession. A Soviet psychiatrist, V. I. Lebedev, then demonstrated on a "scientific" basis that the priests' views on the "comfort" provided by confession were illusory.[33] Similarly, the No. 3, 1988, issue carried a round-table discussion on the topic, "Women, the Family, and Religion," in which an Orthodox priest, who was also an instructor at the Moscow Theological Seminary, and an Orthodox deacon were included.[34] During the meeting, the above-mentioned psychiatrist, Lebedev, discoursed upon the relation of religious belief among women to "hysteria." Presumably, the aim of such dialogues is to confront the intellectual poverty of religion with the alleged scientific superiority of the dialectical materialist world-view.

In another article, V. Garadzha, director of the Institute of Scientific Atheism in Moscow, warned against the temptation for atheist activists to "rush ahead" and attempt to "finish" with religion. There exists a real danger, he warned, that a crudely aggressive approach to religion could turn it into "an anti-socialist force." It should be understood, he consoled his readers, that religion constitutes only a temporary problem: "Life itself is educating them [believers] in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism and is bringing a sociological content to their consciousness while it remains religious, and atheistic education must assist in this process."[35]

The well-known anti-religious specialist Aleksandr Klibanov elaborated upon the new line toward religion in an interview with the Komsomol weekly *Sobesednik*.[36] Looking back wistfully to the 1920's, Klibanov recalled the bracing élan of anti-religious activity in those years: ". . . the propaganda of scientific-atheistic views attracted the sympathetic attention of broad circles of the population significantly more than did religious preaching." The League of Militant Godless was, he said, a popular organization that included representatives of all republics and nationalities, and all social strata—workers, peasants, and intelligentsia. At one time, he recalled, the organization had boasted 3 million members. Its newspapers and journals had enjoyed "enormous popularity." Klibanov clearly hoped that a new League of Militant Godless, perhaps with a different name, could be formed that would once again come to enjoy popular support.

Nevertheless, in response to a question whether a "struggle with religion" should be conducted, Klibanov replied: "The main thing is this: the unity of our society in the task of building socialism is immeasurably more important than the unity of views among workers about religion."

In off-the-record remarks at the Higher Party School in Moscow in March 1988, Konstantin Kharchev joined in cautioning against the danger of alienating religious citizens: "Don't forget, comrades," he warned, "that we have food rationing in many cities."[37] To alienate believers at a time of economic crisis would, Kharchev felt, be foolish and counterproductive.

As the *Kommunist* editorial had done, Kharchev emphasized that the aim of the state should be to ingest and ultimately to absorb the church: "Before us is an astonishing phenomenon: despite all of our efforts, the church survived, and not only survived but is beginning to renew itself. And the question arises: what is more profitable to the party—a person believing in God; a person believing in nothing; or a person believing both in God and in communism?" While the last was clearly preferred, the first was still preferable to the second.

Kharchev went on to discuss the process by which the state was to absorb the church: "One can conclude that there is taking place an intensive process of penetration by the church into state politics. Let us look at the matter soberly: whether by our will or not, religion is entering into socialism, and entering not on foot but on

[32]"Is Not a Thousand Years a Worthy Age?" *Nauka i Religiya*, No. 6, 1988, p. 2.

[33]"The Sacrament of Confession," ibid., No. 1, 1988, pp. 13–16.

[34]Ibid., No. 3, 1988, pp. 15–17.

[35]V. Garadzha, "Toward the Level of the Requirements of Life," ibid., No. 1, 1988, pp. 10–12. See also the important theoretical essay by the same author in ibid., No. 1, 1989, pp. 2–5.

[36]"What Millennium Awaits Us," *Sobesednik* (Moscow), No. 17, April 1988, pp. 12–13.

[37]"Religion and *Perestroyka*," *Russkaya Mysl'* (Paris), May 20, 1988, p. 4.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wheels. And since power belongs entirely to us [the party], it is up to us to steer those wheels in one direction or another, according to our interests."

In passing, Kharchev revealed that the experience of East European communist regimes with religion had been carefully studied as part of the exercise of "new thinking": "When we began to familiarize ourselves with the experience of the Hungarian communists," he recalled, "we were surprised. 'You have priests [*popy*—a derogatory term] in the parliament,' we exclaimed, and we received the answer: 'That's what a parliament is for, to represent all strata of the population without exception'."

Why the Change in Policy?

Undoubtedly, the most significant factor dictating the change of course was the attitude toward religion of the intelligentsia, who have been Gorbachev's most fervent supporters.[38] During Khrushchev's assault on religion, which saw the closing-down of at least 14,000 Russian Orthodox churches, the Soviet intelligentsia had not, for the most part, been concerned, although there were individual exceptions such as Boris Pasternak and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. By the 1980's, however, the mood of the intelligentsia had changed markedly. In an article published in *Komsomol'skaya Pravda* in 1987, anti-religious specialist Z. Tazhurizina, who teaches at Moscow University, noted that during the 1970's and 1980's, sympathy for religion among intellectuals had grown to what she thought were shocking proportions: "For what has already been a long time, in certain circles of the intelligentsia a conciliatory and at times apologetic attitude toward religion and toward idealistic philosophy has been deemed 'breadth of viewpoint' and 'civic boldness.' In these circles, the religious orientation of culture has begun to be seen as a means for humanizing society and for raising its spiritual potential."[39] She continued: "There is often talk to the effect that atheism has created a moral vacuum in the souls of children. Atheism is accused not only of amoralism but is also held responsible for the destruction of artistic monuments."

Another Soviet specialist on religion, Professor V. N. Sherdakov of the Institute of Scientific Atheism of the Academy of Social Sciences at the Party Central Committee, has agreed with Tazhurizina's point that preservationist sentiment has fueled a respect for religion among Soviet intellectuals. "The Russian who is an unbeliever," he writes, "senses more and more strongly 'a love for the graves of his fathers,' which the church has always induced him to respect." Like Tazhurizina, he also mentions the quest for spirituality (*dukhovnost'*): "In the sympathy for religion, there is also reflected a sense of a lack of spirituality [in Soviet society]. . . ."[40]

Intellectuals have not only shown a sympathy for religion but also have begun to practice it. This has been stressed by several Russian Orthodox writers. Thus, *samizdat* author A. Bessmertnyy-Anzimirov observed: "Beginning toward the end of the 1960's, and continuing up to the present day, representatives of the 'intellectual' professions have been continually joining the Russian Orthodox Church, converting at an adult age. A significant percentage of these converts are physicists, mathematicians, doctors, and biologists. . . . And there are almost as many believers among those in the humanities (philology, history, art history, etc.), as well as among artists, musicians, and poets. . . ."[41] In an article appearing in a journal of the Academy of Sciences, *Sotsiologicheskiye Issledovaniya,* Father Pavlov has claimed that approximately one-third of those who regularly attend Orthodox services in the capital cities of Moscow and Leningrad are adult converts, many of them intellectuals.[42]

With hindsight, it is possible to say that the so-called Kryvelev affair forced Gorbachev to make up his mind on a definite religious strategy. On July 30, 1986, a veteran anti-religious specialist and former activist in the League of Militant Godless, Iosif Kryvelev, published an article entitled "Flirting with Dear Little God" in *Komsomol'skaya Pravda,* in which he assailed the inroads that "God-seeking" had been making among the creative intelligentsia. Kryvelev singled out three leading Soviet writers for attack: Kirgiz author Chingiz Aitmatov, Siberian prosaist Viktor Astaf'yev, and Belorussian writer Vasil' Bykaw (Bykov). These three writers had made their respect for religion explicit and were undisputed leaders of the intelligentsia. Aitmatov and Bykaw had

[38]See Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika,* New York, Harper and Row, updated edition, 1988, pp. 66 and 69.

[39]Z. Tazhurizina, "So, In What Way Is Religion 'Useful'?" *Komsomol'skaya Pravda* (Moscow), Apr. 10, 1987.

[40]V. N. Sherdakov, "Where Does Religiosity End and Atheism Begin?" *Sotsiologicheskiye Issledovaniya* (Moscow), No. 4, 1987, pp. 46–47.

[41]A. Bessmertnyy-Anzimirov, "The Russian Orthodox Church in the Thousandth Year of Its Existence," *Vestnik R. Kh. D.* (Paris), No. 153, 1988, p. 209.

[42]S. N. Pavlov (Priest-monk Innokentiy), "Concerning the Contemporary Situation of the Russian Orthodox Church," *Sotsiologicheskiye Issledovaniya,* No. 4, 1987, pp. 39–40.

In a recent interview with a Russian-language newspaper of Tajikistan, priest-monk Andronik Trubachev stated that the growth of Russian Orthodox religious sentiment was more noticeable among Soviet intellectuals than among any other social class. See "Faith and Hope," *Komsomolets Tadzhikistana* (Dushanbe), Nov. 27, 1988.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

been elected in May 1986 as members of the eight-man bureau of the USSR Writers' Union, and Astaf'yev's short novel, *The Sad Detective,* had caused a literary sensation when it was published in January 1986.

Although Kryvelev's attack caused considerable indignation among the Soviet intelligentsia, it was nearly six months before poet Yevgeniy Yevtushenko was permitted to contest Kryvelev's views on the pages of *Komsomol'skaya Pravda.*[43] Yevtushenko did not disguise his contempt for what he called Kryvelev's atheistic "dogmatism." Kryvelev's view of Soviet society, Yevtushenko wrote, is quite simply outdated: "Our socialist state is a union of communists and non-party members, of believers and atheists. Atheism is a voluntary phenomenon, not something coercively thrust upon people." Yevtushenko termed the Bible, which Kryvelev had attacked as an immoral book, "a great cultural monument" which should be officially published by the Soviet government. In place of Kryvelev's watchful, suspicious "dogmatic atheism," Yevtushenko advocated a relaxed, tolerant "true Marxism" unafraid of religion.

Yevtushenko's views soon became the conventional wisdom among Gorbachev's supporters in the intelligentsia. Thus, during a round table discussion in early 1987, literary critic Valentin Oskotskiy, a fervent Gorbachevite, likened Kryvelev's view to Mao Zedong's fanatic notion "of the universal victory of socialism after the destruction of half of humanity in a third world war."[44] And Professor V. N. Sherdakov of Moscow's Institute of Scientific Atheism noted: "The article of Doctor of Philosophical Sciences I. Kryvelev has led to nothing but a weakening of the position of atheism. . . . I can testify that a majority of specialists in religious studies dissociate themselves from his position in a most decisive fashion."[45]

Thus, in the showdown between the anti-religious specialist and "God-seeking" writers, it was the professional atheist who suffered a significant rebuff. To be sure, religious belief was not vindicated, but dogmatic atheism was deemed by most commentators to be a worse offense than "God-seeking." This turn of events elicited a cry of despair from Yelena Losoto, a fiery *Komsomol'skaya Pravda* publicist, who revealed that it was she who had edited Kryvelev's article for publication.[46] Losoto lamented aloud that "our ideology" was in the process of being discarded, and she vehemently assailed the "slave religions" of Christianity and Judaism. "Atheism," she warned, "is now in need not of diffidence . . . but of attacking force. In my opinion, atheism is now on the defensive. . . ."

Another factor influencing Gorbachev's change of approach toward religion has been the sheer number of believers in the Soviet Union. One of the principal aims of *perestroyka* has been to mobilize the masses on the side of the reforms and against Gorbachev's conservative opponents. As Gorbachev was aware, a goodly percentage of the population consists of religious believers.

Until approximately 1988, Soviet commentators invariably cited low figures for the number of believers in the country. Thus, for example, in his study, *Contemporary Russian Orthodoxy,* which was published in 1987, anti-religious specialist N. S. Gordiyenko reported that believers comprised about 8 to 10 percent of the population of the Soviet Union, and that most of them were elderly women.[47] In the spring of 1988, however, in an interview appearing in *Ogonek,* Konstantin Kharchev stated that religious believers number 70 million, i.e., about 25 percent of the Soviet population.[48] This was a considerable jump from Gordiyenko's figure, but even this revised figure was too low. In a letter that appeared in *Pravda* in June 1988, Academicians Tat'yana Zaslavskaya and Boris Raushenbakh and two colleagues, Sergey Averintsev and Ales' Adamovich, accused the CRA of consistently underestimating the number of believers in the USSR. "The figures on the number of believers," they wrote, "which are communicated by oblast and republican CRA officials, do not correspond to reality."[49]

Western specialists also tend to give a much higher figure than that provided by Kharchev. For example, Jane Ellis, of Britain's Keston College, a research and documentation center on the subject of religion in com-

[43]Yevgeniy Yevtushenko, "The Source of Morality Is Culture," *Komsomol'skaya Pravda,* Dec. 10, 1986.

[44]See "We Discuss Chingiz Aitmotov's Novel 'The Executioner's Block'," *Voprosy Literatury* (Moscow), No. 3, 1987, pp. 51–53.

[45]Sherdakov, loc. cit., p. 47. Kryvelev has reentered the fray with a letter in the June 27, 1989, issue of *Sovetskaya Kul'tura,* p. 6.

[46]Ye. Losoto, "A 'Divine' Polemic," *Komsomol'skaya Pravda,* Oct. 21, 1987.

The following Soviet writers and intellectuals have been especially outspoken in their advocacy of improving the position of believers: academicians Dmitriy Likhachev, Tat'yana Zaslavskaya, and Boris Raushenbakh; corresponding members of the Academy of Sciences Sergey Averintsev and Igor' Shafarevich; writers Ales' Adamovich, Viktor Astaf'yev, Vasil' Bykaw, Yevgeniy Yevtushenko, Daniil Granin, Yuriy Karyakin, Valentin Rasputin, Vladimir Soloukhin, and Sergey Zalygin.

[47]N. S. Gordiyenko, *Sovremmenoye Russkoye Pravoslaviye,* Leningrad, Lenizdat, 1987, p. 149.

[48]Konstantin Kharchev, "Conscience is Free," *Ogonek,* No. 21, 1988, p. 26.

[49]"To Depart from Dogmas," *Pravda,* June 17, 1988. See also the letter on the need for new Soviet legislation on religion by Zaslavskaya, Averintsev, Zalygin, and Father Gleb Yakunin in *Ogonek,* No. 50, 1988, p. 2.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

munist lands, has recently conservatively estimated that believers comprise 41 percent of the Soviet population.[50] A figure in the 40–50 percent range is often cited by Western specialists. Interestingly, during a closed meeting with party activists at the Higher Party School in Moscow in March 1988, Kharchev stated that believers make up 70 percent of the adult population of the Soviet Union.[51]

An additional factor encouraging a more tolerant policy toward religion, and especially toward the Russian Orthodox Church, has been the marked growth of Russian nationalist sentiment under conditions of *glasnost'*.[52] The possibility that Russian nationalists as a whole might side with his political opponents made it incumbent upon Gorbachev that he attempt to split the nationalists. Overtures to Russian Orthodox believers among the nationalists appeared to be the logical way to "divide and rule." The Millennium in June 1988 presented a unique opportunity for such overtures.

In the period leading up to the Millennium festivities, one began to encounter numerous "antidotes" to Russian nationalism appearing in the Gorbachevite press. Father Pavlov was one of those enlisted in the effort; in an interview appearing in *Nedelya,* for example, he insisted that, "the Russian Orthodox Church is the Orthodox Church in Russia [*Rossiya*] and not a church for [ethnic] Russians [*russkikh*] . . . ."[53] Citing the writings of St. Paul, Father Pavlov maintained that in Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek." While commending *Pamyat'* for its efforts to preserve Russian historical monuments, he took issue with the organization's propagation of "enmity" and with its "demagogy."

Similar statements have been made by liberal Russian nationalists, such as Academician Dmitriy Likhachev and Sergey Averintsev. "It is precisely the international character of Christianity," Likhachev declared during an interview with *Sovetskaya Kul'tura,* "that has made it a universal religion."[54] Chauvinism on the part of religious believers, Likhachev affirmed, was due primarily to ignorance of the Bible and of religious literature, and of the traditional Orthodox way of life.

During the first three-and-a-half years of Gorbachev's tenure as general secretary, his most serious political opponents were a group of party conservatives, whose leading spokesman was Yegor Ligachev, party secretary for ideology until September 1988. Fortunately for Gorbachev, this group of conservatives was quite hostile to religion, as is underscored in the putative "program" of the tendency, the now-notorious Andreyeva letter that was published in *Sovetskaya Rossiya,* the daily newspaper of the Russian Republic.[55] The letter, it will be recalled, had attacked both the "God-seeking" proclivities of Gorbachev's followers among the intellectuals and "the uncritical views on religio-mystical Russian philosophy" held by the "traditionalists," i.e., the Russian nationalists. Andreyeva's —and by inference Ligachev's—attack upon the religious nationalists provided Gorbachev with a useful opportunity to split them off from their unreligious and anti-religious nationalist brethren. This development was probably a major reason why the Gorbachevite press became so enthusiastically pro-Orthodox in the period April–June 1988.[56]

Debating New Legislation on Religion

The *Kommunist* editorial had, it will be recalled, suggested a revision of the existing Soviet legislation on religion. In his April 1988 meeting with Patriarch Pimen, Gorbachev had promised that the new legislation would be issued "soon." More than a year later, this legislation was still to be issued, and there is abundant evidence that a battle royal has developed in the Soviet leadership over what changes should be embodied in the new laws. The battle seems to have been waged on two fronts: on the one hand, between Gorbachev, Yakovlev, and their followers and conservative Communists such as Ligachev; on the other hand, between the Gorbachev camp and foot-dragging "centrists" such as former CRA Chairman Kharchev, who are willing to countenance reforms but who want to proceed slowly and carefully.

[50]Jane Ellis, "The Religious Renaissance in the Soviet Union: Myth or Reality?" paper presented at the July 1988 London conference on "Christianity in the Eastern Slav Lands." See. fn. 18.

[51]See Konstantin Kharchev, "Religion and *Perestroyka,*" loc. cit.

[52]On this, see John B. Dunlop, "The Contemporary Russian Nationalist Spectrum," and Darrell P. Hammer, "*Glasnost'* and 'The Russian Idea'," in Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty, *Radio Liberty Research* (Munich), Special Edition, Dec. 19, 1988, pp. 1–24.

[53]See "The Time is Auspicious," loc. cit., p. 19.

[54]See *Sovetskaya Kul'tura,* May 24, 1988.

[55]Nina Andreyeva, "I Cannot Forsake Principles," *Sovetskaya Rossiya* (Moscow), Mar. 13, 1988, p. 3.

[56]It should be noted that in the months following Gorbachev's lightning political coup of late September 1988, which led to Ligachev's losing the ideological portfolio and to Vitaliy Vorotnikov's being "kicked upstairs" to the largely ceremonial post of president of the Russian Republic, Gorbachev's opponents have moved decisively to correct the tactical error of being openly anti-Orthodox. Conservative Russian nationalists, who now appear to have replaced the neo-Stalinists as Gorbachev's most determined and vociferous adversaries, have been stressing their devotion to and support for Russian Orthodoxy. For example, Russian nationalist critic Anatoliy Lanshchikov made positive references to Christianity (*Literaturnaya Rossiya* [Moscow], Oct. 28, 1988), while Russian nationalist economics writer Anatoliy Salutskiy has cited Metropolitan Yuvenaliy of Krutitsy as an authority (ibid., Dec. 23, 1988).

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The April 17, 1988, issue of *Izvestiya* carried an interview with Professor V. Klochkov, a party conservative working on the new legislation. An unrepentant hardliner, Klochkov energetically defended the 1929 "Stalinist" legislation on religion: "The decree and the legal acts of 1929," he declared, "introduced democratic foundations for the organization and activity of religious associations." Attacking "one-sided" criticism of that legislation, he added: "We have to get rid of the thought that in a society in which the majority are unbelievers, there do not exist problems with preserving the rights of atheists." The interviewer, *Izvestiya* political correspondent Yuriy Feofanov, vehemently disagreed with Klochkov's position: ". . . the question," Feofanov wrote, "concerns the interests and rights of millions of [religious] people—of patriots, workers, and citizens."

One of the most fascinating developments in this debate over religious policy was the open feud that developed between journalist Aleksandr Nezhnyy, the Gorbachevites' "designated hitter" on religious issues, and former CRA Chairman Kharchev. Nezhnyy, whose primary loyalty appears to be to the Russian Orthodox Church, had been given a green light to push the church's case against the go-slow tactics of party centrists and the heated opposition of the conservatives.

In unleashing Nezhnyy, the Gorbachevites may have gotten more than they bargained for. While he has concentrated his fire on the anti-religious practices of the Stalin and Brezhnev eras, Nezhnyy has not refrained from criticizing attempts to uproot religion under Lenin and Khrushchev. "If Bukharin did not think about the democratic rights of his believing fellow citizens," he stated during an interview appearing in *Ogonek,* "what is one to say about comrades Stalin, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev?"[57]

In early 1988, Nezhnyy's interview with Kharchev appeared on the pages of *Ogonek.* The strong differences of opinion between the two men became quite apparent. At one point, Nezhnyy exclaimed: "With bitterness, we must admit that the constitutional rights of believers and the legislation on religious cults are being infringed [by Soviet officials] very often."[58] Kharchev took indignant exception to this sweeping generalization. Similarly, in an article appearing in *Izvestiya,* Nezhnyy focused on the indifference habitually exhibited by the CRA to the plight of Soviet religious believers. "We wrote to the CRA," he quoted one distraught believer as saying, "we wrote to Kharchev. . . . We wrote to the Central Committee. We wrote again to Kharchev. We wrote to the Supreme Soviet. A [CRA] official came to see us from Novgorod and said: 'Write anywhere you want. There will be no church for you.' "[59]

At about the same time, Nezhnyy published in *Moscow News* an exposé of the flagrant violation of believers' legal rights committed by CRA officials in the case of a Russian Orthodox parish in the city of Frunze.[60] He summed up his indictment: "Thus, as we can see, the existing legislation was violated, and the people on the CRA interfered without justification in the life of a parish. . . ." Three months later, the same newspaper published Kharchev's apology on behalf of the CRA: "The Council for Religious Affairs discussed [Nezhnyy's] article at its session and found its publication a timely and fair contribution to the cause of restructuring the Council and its local bodies."[61] Kharchev's statement continued: "[CRA representatives] were warned that they would be held responsible for failing to perform their official duties. It was concluded that the work of the Council was to be urgently improved."

But Nezhnyy returned to the attack in the No. 44, 1988, issue of *Moscow News.* "It is lamentable," he complained, "that many relatively young representatives from the CRA attached to the Council of Ministers —mediators between the state and the religious communities, between local authorities and believers—are so full of the spirit of Stalinist intolerance that they are as zealous as their predecessors in persecuting the church and believers."[62] The purpose behind Nezhnyy's attacks was presumably to maintain the pressure for religious reform and, perhaps, to prepare the ground for Kharchev's ouster, which in fact occurred in mid-1989.

In the No. 50, 1988, issue of *Ogonek,* which featured another Nezhnyy-Kharchev colloquy, Nezhnyy lashed out at the CRA's footdragging in turning churches over to believers: "Konstantin Mikhaylovich," he addressed his interlocutor, "does the present legislation permit the CRA to decide the question of turning over churches to the believers? After all, it is to you, to the CRA, that they bring their petitions, despairing of encountering humanity and common sense on the part of local authorities."

Nezhnyy and Kharchev also disagreed on the degree to which the Russian Church was persecuted after the Bolshevik Revolution. Nezhnyy condemned the murder of Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev in 1918 and the

[57]"Law and Conscience," loc. cit., p. 5.
[58]"Conscience Is Free," loc. cit., p. 26.
[59]Aleksandr Nezhnyy, "A Destroyed Church," *Izvestiya,* Sept. 21, 1988.
[60]Aleksandr Nezhnyy, "Their Own Man in the Church," *Moscow News,* No. 22, 1988, p. 13.
[61]" 'Their Own Man in the Church': Update," ibid., No. 34, 1988, p. 2.
[62]Ibid., No. 44, 1988, p. 8.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trial and execution of Metropolitan Venyamin of Petrograd in 1922. "I am completely convinced," he declared, "that Metropolitan Venyamin was innocent." Kharchev, by contrast, attempted to justify the executions, noting that the period had been one of "open confrontation" between the church and the new regime.

Nevertheless, Kharchev did characterize the 1929 legislation on religion as "typically Stalinist" and agreed with Nezhnyy that Article 52 of the Soviet Constitution should be rewritten in order to offer equal rights to both atheists and believers. On the critical issue of allowing group religious instruction of children—of Sunday schools—Kharchev waffled and was later pinioned by Nezhnyy, who declared: "If someone tries to create a circle where the foundations of religion are taught to children, he immediately falls into the ranks of criminals."

Again under prodding from Nezhnyy, Kharchev admitted that the functions of the CRA must be changed. When Nezhnyy asked: "What kind of freedom of conscience is it when a religious society has to receive permission from the state for its existence?" Kharchev replied: "The principle of authorizing the registration [of religious associations] is a fallacious one; it has to be repudiated." Looking to the future, Kharchev predicted: "Probably the CRA of the USSR Council of Ministers will become something else. I see it in the capacity of a standing commission of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet. Similar commissions can be created in the union republics as well. . . . From an administrative organ . . . ," Kharchev continued, the CRA "would turn into an organ of popular power [*narodovlastiye*]. . . ."

During the winter of 1989, a draft of the new legislation was presented to major religious bodies in the USSR by the CRA so that they could suggest emendations to the text. The final draft will eventually be submitted to the new Council of People's Deputies for approval.[63]

The Nezhnyy-Kharchev feud shows how the press has been used by the Gorbachevites as an instrument for effecting change in the treatment of religion. Under intense pressure from the media, and especially from Nezhnyy, Kharchev was forced to make concessions to the Russian Orthodox Church and to suggest publicly a transformation of the body he headed.

The struggle between Nezhnyy and Kharchev has been only the most visible and long-lasting of a number of battles that have taken place over the question of the new approach to religion. In May 1988, Igor' Belyayev, the political commentator for *Literaturnaya Gazeta,* struck out at those who wanted to increase restrictions on religion. Citing a reader's letter, he noted that the March 1988 plenum of the Moscow City Party Committee had demanded that "atheist work move into an attacking position and that this work be carried out on an individual basis."[64] "Individual work with believers" had been criticized in the *Kommunist* editorial. One can surmise that the resolution of the Moscow City Party Committee reflects militant anti-religious views on the part of that body's chairman, Lev Zaykov, a conservative full member of the Politburo.

In his off-the-record comments at the Moscow Higher Party School in March 1988, Kharchev revealed that there were sharp disagreements in the party leadership over the new approach to religion.[65] He mentioned for example, that many party members had become upset when Russian Orthodox clergy began to sit on "all those committees and foundations—the Peace Fund, the Cultural Foundation, the Children's Fund. . . ."[66] And when the clergy began to be shown on Soviet television, Kharchev would receive angry telephone calls from party veterans, asking: "Why was it permitted? Why are they showing them? That's religious propaganda."

According to Kharchev, two issues in particular disturbed and divided the top party leadership. One has been the issue of religious education for children, a practice that is being illegally conducted by some religious groups in the Soviet Union, though not by the submissive Russian Orthodox Church. In his address to the Higher Party School, Kharchev recalled: "I took the question of religious education upstairs [*naverkh*] and received a reprimand: 'Now we've seen everything. Sunday schools in the 70th year of Soviet power. Are you in your right mind? What will people say'?" Kharchev made sure his audience understood his own position: "I want you to understand me correctly. I am against Sunday schools, but we have to do something." Something had to be done, in his opinion, because of demands from believers.

[63]On the new legislation, see "Draft Law on Freedom of Conscience," Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty, *Report on the USSR,* Mar. 31, 1989, pp. 17–18; "What Should the Law be Like?" *Moscow News,* No. 15, 1989, pp. 8–9; and O. Osipov, "From a Scholar's Perspective," *Nauka i Religiya,* No. 12, 1988, pp. 14–15. Jurist Yu. A. Rozenbaum has published a draft of the new law in *Sovetskoye Gosudarstvo i Pravo* (Moscow), No. 2, 1989, pp. 91–98; two other drafts, which were leaked to the West, have appeared in the July 22, 1988, and April 7, 1989, issues of the émigré weekly *Russkaya Mysl'.*

[64]"The New Thinking and Freedom of Conscience," *Literaturnaya Gazeta,* May 18, 1988, p. 10.

[65]"Religion and *Perestroyka,*" loc. cit.

[66]More recently, a struggle has occurred within the party over the issue of whether or not clergymen should be permitted to run for the Congress of People's Deputies. The journal *Kommunist* had to explain why clergy were to be permitted to stand for election. See "Religion and the Elections," *Kommunist,* No. 6, 1989, pp. 82–83. Four members of the Holy Synod are now members of the Congress of People's Deputies.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The second contested issue has concerned the publication of religious literature. In his remarks at the Higher Party School, Kharchev said: "There are too few Bibles, too few. For the Millennium there will be a printing of 100,000 'patriarchal' Bibles. From Sweden, we're going to bring in 100,000, and we're going to let the Baptists import 100,000 from abroad. [Comment from the hall: 'Too few!'] I also think that it's too few. I went upstairs with a request to increase the print run, and they told me: 'You want a lot!' In reality, we do not have a church publication. The *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* has a print run of 30,000. That's a drop in the ocean."

Kharchev and his audience were not, of course, concerned about the spiritual well-being of Soviet believers. What interested them was the question of tactics: how to reduce the political alienation of believers from the regime at a time of *perestroyka* while at the same time ensuring the party's continued political and ideological hegemony. It appeared that those "upstairs" were not in agreement as to how this tightrope should be walked. The struggle among party liberals, centrists, and conservatives on this politically volatile and divisive question will undoubtedly continue.

Russian Orthodoxy

What has been the reaction of the hierarchy, clergy, and laity of the Russian Orthodox Church, the largest religious body in the Soviet Union, to Gorbachev's "new thinking" in the religious sphere? The reaction of present-day Orthodox Christians can best be understood against the background of the Church's experience in the decades following the Bolshevik Revolution.

The condition of the church. The Russian Orthodox Church—its other name is the Moscow Patriarchate—officially embraces all believers of the Orthodox faith in the Soviet Union, except for those in the republic of Georgia, where there is an autocephalous, or independent, Orthodox church.[67]

On the eve of Gorbachev's accession, the Russian Orthodox Church was one of the most tightly-controlled religious bodies in the world.[68] Its fate under the Bolshevik regime had been grim. According to Soviet anti-religious specialist A. Veshchikov, there were 78,767 Russian Orthodox churches and chapels on the eve of the Bolshevik takeover. By 1941, their number had "decreased by 95 percent."[69] The number of active bishops fell from 130 in 1914 to between four and seven in 1940, while the number of active priests fell from 51,105 to less than 500.[70] Many bishops and clergy were either executed or sent to the Gulag, where many perished. "Incalculable millions" of lay believers suffered unnatural deaths during the same period.[71]

Revived by Stalin in 1943 to help mobilize the Russian population for the war effort, the Moscow Patriarchate enjoyed a respite from severe persecution until 1959, when, at the 21st Party Congress, a secret decision was taken to wipe out religion in the main.[72] During the years 1959–64, at least 14,000 Orthodox churches were closed down, with many of them being subsequently razed, and five of the eight functioning theological seminaries were shut down.[73] The number of active monasteries declined from 69 in 1958 to 20 today (with an additional two monasteries abroad, one in Israel and one on Mt. Athos).[74] During the Brezhnev period, the persecution of religion was attenuated but not reversed; in his address to the Higher Party School, Khar-

[67]On the contemporary Georgian Orthodox Church, see the chapter by C. J. Peters in Pedro Ramet, Ed., *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twentieth Century*, Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 1988, pp. 286–308.

The Armenian Apostolic Church is not in communion with the Russian Orthodox Church (see ibid., pp. 353–74).

In addition, there are the followers of the proscribed True Orthodox Church, whose numbers may be considerable but cannot at present be calculated. The members of this "underground" Church reject Metropolitan Sergiy's 1927 "Declaration of Loyalty." On the True Orthodox Church, see William C. Fletcher, *The Russian Orthodox Church Underground, 1917–1970,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1971; and "The Catacombs," in Pospielovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime,* Vol. 2, pp. 365–86. Another Orthodox group, the Old Believers, has been in schism from the Russian Orthodox Church since the 17th century.

[68]For an excellent study of the Russian Orthodox Church on the eve of *perestroyka*, see Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church: A Contemporary History*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1986.

[69]Cited in Catherine P. Henry, "Registration of Churches in the Soviet Union," *Religion in Communist Dominated Areas* (New York), Winter 1987, p. 14. Veshchikov's article appeared in the No. 11, 1962, issue of *Nauka i Religiya*.

[70]The figure on the number of victims among the clergy is provided by Oxana Antic in *Radio Liberty Research*, RL 171/88, Apr. 22, 1988. Her source is a booklet published in 1987 in West Germany, with a foreword by Patriarch Pimen. The figures presumably come from the Moscow Patriarchate.

[71]Dimitry V. Pospielovsky, *A History of Marxist-Leninist Atheism and Soviet Antireligious Policies*, London, The Macmillan Press, 1987, Vol. 1, p. ix. When the publication *Argumenty i Fakty* recently asked Metropolitan Vladimir of Rostov and Novocherkassk whether he could provide "at least an approximate figure" for the number of priests, deacons, and laity repressed during the period 1918–38, he replied that "for the time being" he could not (No. 10, 1989, p. 4).

[72]Pospielovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime,* Vol. 2, p. 356.

[73]The figure of 22,000 functioning Russian Orthodox parishes in 1958 is provided in an anonymous open letter written by Orthodox Christians inside the Soviet Union, published in the Paris-based *Aide aux Croyants de l'URSS, No. 55, Summer 1988*, p. 5. According to Konstantin Kharchev's tables, which appear in the No. 11, 1987 issue of *Nauka i Religiya* (p. 23), there were 11,742 functioning Russian Orthodox churches in 1961, and 7,523 in 1966.

[74]On the number of monasteries, see Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church*, p. 125.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

chev noted that some 1,300 Orthodox churches were closed down under Brezhnev.

How many adherents does the present-day Russian Orthodox Church have? Writing in *Sotsiologicheskiye Issledovaniya,* Father Pavlov has accepted a Western estimate that Orthodox Christians—excluding those in Georgia—comprise 19.5 percent of the Soviet populace.[75] Since the Soviet population is now 285 million, this yields a figure of roughly 55 million. Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Belorussia, a member of the Holy Synod, recently cited a figure of "over 50 million" to the newspaper *Sovetskaya Kul'tura.*[76]

At the recently-convoked Local Council (*pomestnyy sobor*), held on the occasion of the Millennium in June 1988, Metropolitan Yuvenaliy of Krutitsy and Kolomna, the church's second-ranking hierarch after the patriarch, reported that there had been "over 30 million" Russian Orthodox baptisms in the USSR during the period 1971–87, i.e., almost 2 million a year.[77]

The Russian Orthodox Church is, consequently, a very large institution, with a membership more than two-and-a-half times as large as that of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Yet this massive religious body has remarkably few functioning parishes. At the Millennium celebrations, Metropolitan Vladimir of Rostov and Novocherkassk, the Patriarchate's chancellor, reported that the Church had 6,893 functioning parishes.[78] This represented a slight increase over the 1986 figure of 6,794 provided by Kharchev.

According to Jane Ellis of Keston College, the USSR has approximately one functioning church for every 7,700 Orthodox worshippers. This compares poorly with, for example, communist Romania, where there are approximately 11,000 places of worship (as well as 122 functioning monasteries and convents) for an estimated 15–17 million Orthodox believers.[79] There is evidence that the Moscow Patriarchate leadership and the CRA were sensitive regarding this poor ratio of churches to number of believers and tried to conceal it. In 1982, the Moscow Patriarchate reported to the World Council of Churches that it had 50 million adherents and 20,000 functioning churches.[80] Kharchev's recently-released figures show that it actually had only 7,007 registered parishes in 1981,[81] so there was an exaggeration by a factor of almost three.

In the course of his address to the Higher Party School mentioned above, Kharchev admitted that the CRA had deliberately "suppressed" the Russian Orthodox Church from Khrushchev's time until the Gorbachev period, while allowing the Protestant denominations to flourish. He stated that the reason for this policy was a fear that the Protestants would go underground. This was undoubtedly a consideration, but one suspects that the Orthodox and Muslims have been treated harshly because, due to their numbers—there are approximately 45 million Muslims in the USSR—they were viewed by the regime as a potential political threat.[82]

Reference to the small number of functioning churches of Russian Orthodoxy does not tell the whole story. The churches of the Moscow Patriarchate are unevenly spaced throughout the Soviet Union, with most of them being clustered in the western regions of the country. Of the roughly 7,000 registered Orthodox churches in the USSR, more than 4,000 are located in Ukraine, many of then in western Ukraine, where the population overwhelmingly adhered to the Eastern Rite Catholic Church officially dissolved in 1946–48. In the L'viv-Ternopil' diocese alone, there are 1,006 registered parishes.[83] There may be close to 1,000 registered churches in Belorussia, Moldavia, the Baltic, and Central Asia, which would leave only approximately 2,000 churches for the vast territory of the Russian Republic (RSFSR).[84]

Following the advent of *glasnost',* Russian Orthodox voices have frequently been heard protesting the low number of registered churches. In a roundtable discussion appearing in the Soviet journal *Vek XX i Mir,* Orthodox protodeacon Aleksandr Borisov complained: "The shortage of Orthodox churches is catastrophic (the only exception being the western regions of the Ukraine and Belorussia). Even in Moscow (the popula-

---

[75]S. N. Pavlov (Priest-monk Innokentiy), loc. cit., p. 40, footnote. This is also the approximate figure cited by Keston College. See "Holy Russia's Millenium," *The Economist,* Apr. 2, 1988, p. 18.

[76]*Sovetskaya Kul'tura,* May 28, 1988.

[77]"Text of speech by Metropolitan Yuvenaliy of Krutitsy and Kolomna, Member of the Holy Synod, at the Solemn Ceremony in the Bol'shoy Theater on June 10, 1988," p. 12. Since these were years when the church was required to keep careful records concerning baptisms, this information ought to be quite accurate.

[78]*Press Release* [of the Moscow Patriarchate], No. 6, English edition, June 8, 1988, p. 1.

[79]On the number of functioning Orthodox places of worship in Romania, see Pedro Ramet, op. cit., p. 231.

[80]See World Council of Churches, *Handbook, Member Churches,* Geneva, The Council, 1982, p. 172.

[81]*Nauka i Religiya,* No. 11, 1987, p. 23.

[82]Beginning in 1988, the regime appears to have decided to reverse its discriminatory stance toward the Russian Orthodox Church. *Moscow News,* No. 15, 1989, reported that 1,244 of the 1,610 new parishes registered between April 1988 and April 1989 belonged to the Russian Orthodox Church. These figures must, of course, be used with caution.

[83]See Bohdan Nahaylo, "Moscow, Ukraine and the Millenium." Paper prepared for the July 1988 London Conference on "Christianity in the East Slavic Lands" (see fn. 18). Nahaylo's source on churches in Ukraine was a Novosti press release of May 24, 1988; for the Lviv-Ternopil' figures, see the No. 5, 1988, issue of *Lyudyna i Svit* (Kiev), p. 54.

[84]The figure of 2,000 functioning Orthodox churches in the RSFSR was recently cited by the Leningrad chapter of the Russian nationalist organization *Pamyat'.* See *Veche* (Munich), No. 32, 1988, p. 85.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion here is now triple that of the 1940's, i.e., 8 million), the number of Orthodox churches is less than 50. Other cities with a population of more than 2 million (Sverdlovsk, Minsk) have only one or two churches. On Sundays or feast days, the churches are so crowded that our worshippers cannot cross themselves."[85]

In an interview appearing in *Moscow News*, Archbishop Feodosiy of Omsk and Tyumen' recently reported that the Omsk region had only eight functioning Orthodox churches; by contrast, he said, it had 80 Lutheran and 60 Baptist parishes.[86] From the fragmentary data available, it appears that in certain areas of the country, such as Siberia, the Russian Church has completely lost the religious initiative to Protestant denominations.

An Orthodox *samizdat* writer Kirill Golovin (who appears to be a Russian nationalist) has written indignantly concerning the disparity of registered churches in the RSFSR and in other union republics: "In Lithuania, for example, there are 650 Catholic churches for a population of 3.5 million, while in Leningrad, with a population of five million, there are 15 Orthodox churches. . . . In the Carpathian diocese on the border, there are 420 churches, while in Arkhangel'sk diocese, with a size twice that of France, there are seven Orthodox churches. In little Armenia, there are as many churches as in the vast Penza and Kursk oblasts taken together."[87]

In addition to having few parishes, the Russian Orthodox Church also lacks clergy. In his speech to participants in the Millennium celebrations, Metropolitan Vladimir of Rostov and Novocherkassk reported that the church had 6,674 priests and 723 deacons.[88] Jane Ellis has noted that the number of priests cited by Metropolitan Vladimir is 200 less than the number of functioning churches (6,893). She adds: "Since large city churches customarily have more than one priest, this means that there are still a number of parishes without a permanent priest." According to Ellis, the regime's policy at present is to "maintain but not increase" the number of active clergy. The number of monastics is also being kept steady: in 1974, there were a reported 1,275 Orthodox monastics in the USSR; in 1988, there were 1,190.[89]

The social profile of Orthodox laity has been changing markedly since the 1960's. According to Bessmertnyy-Anzimirov,

The proportion of the younger and middle-aged generations (aged 20-50) has grown to such an extent that the usual "church old ladies" are at times lost among the younger people, especially on holidays. And this is true not only in Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev, but also in many oblast centers (for example, in the Volga Region and in Eastern Siberia, and in the Russian Orthodox parishes of Latvia and Estonia.) According to figures supplied by the clergy, youth now makes up approximately one-third of the number of parishioners.[90]

Father Pavlov observes in his *Sotsiologicheskiye Issledovaniya* article that some one-third of those regularly attending services in Moscow and Leningrad are adult converts, "neophytes," many of them with excellent education. Priest-monk Andronik Trubachev also asserts that the level of religiosity has been "growing among people with higher education."[91]

These observations on the changing face of the believing populace have been confirmed by Soviet antireligious specialists. Writing in *Nauka i Religiya*, V. Pravotorov has noted: "Yesterday, believers in their majority still noticeably gave way to atheists in level of education and degree of public activity, but today a new type of believer has been formed—one who is literate, who knows religious doctrines well, and who is socially and ideologically active. . . ."[92] Professor Sherdakov of the Moscow Institute of Scientific Atheism adds: "Under present circumstances, conversion to religious faith is not directly connected with level of education."[93]

Father Trubachev notes that the spread of religion has been largely an urban phenomenon and has not been as evident in the countryside.[94] Bessmertnyy-Anzimirov adds that Orthodoxy is also having difficul-

---

[85]"Dialogue for the Benefit of Mankind," *Twentieth Century and Peace* (Moscow), No. 7, 1988, p. 45. I have modified the translation contained in this English-language version of the Russian-language journal to make it more readable.

[86]"Orthodoxy in Siberia," *Moscow News*, No. 48, 1988, pp. 14–15. Beginning in 1988, the Moscow Patriarchate has been permitted to shore up its position in the Far Eastern Maritime Kray. A bishop has been appointed to the vacant Khabarovsk diocese, and the number of parishes in the area has been increased from a reported four to 15 (*Zhurnal Moskovskoy Patriarkhii*, No. 10, 1988, p. 3).

[87]Kirill Golovin, "Between Doubt and Hope," *Russkaya Mysl'*, Apr 1, 1988, p. 13. The first part of this essay appeared in the March 25, 1988, issue of ibid., p. 12. CRA official I. M. Vyshchelan has reported that there are 16 functioning Orthodox churches in the city of Leningrad and 33 in Leningrad oblast. See "Society and the Church," *Leningradskaya Pravda* (Leningrad), Jan. 24, 1989. One new church has been opened in the city of Moscow, and permission has been received to build another. See Natal'ya Davydova, "A Returned Church," *Moskovskiye Novosti* (Moscow), No. 6, 1989, p. 14; and Priest Mark Smirnov, "The Trinity Cathedral in Orekhovo-Borisovo," ibid., No. 18, 1989.

[88]*Press Release* [of the Moscow patriarchate], English edition, No. 6, June 8, 1988, p. 1.

[89]Jane Ellis, "Statistics and Hopes at Moscow Sobor," *Keston News Service* (Keston, Kent), No. 304, July 7, 1988, pp. 20–21.

[90]A. Bessmertnyy-Anzimirov, loc. cit., p. 211.

[91]"Faith and Hope," *Komsomolets Tadzhikistana*, Nov. 27, 1988.

[92]V. Pravotorov, "The Greatest Mistake," *Nauka i Religiya*, No. 11, 1987, p. 20.

[93]"Where does Religiousity End and Atheism Begin," loc. cit., p. 48.

[94]"Faith and Hope," loc. cit.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ties in attracting those in the working class, who are drawn to the Protestants. "Unfortunately," he observes, "at the present time, the Russian Orthodox Church has nothing to say to the workers in a language that is accessible and understandable . . . ." To counteract the successes of the Protestants, an Orthodox movement of "apostolic laymen," has, he reports, been formed in Eastern Siberia. Finally, he notes that the Orthodox also have problems in attracting the Soviet "middle class" —i.e., people in the trade and service industries.[95]

The low number of functioning churches and of registered clergy is compounded by other constraints on the practice of religion. A recent appeal entitled, "Brothers, Help Us," which was authored by Orthodox believers and sent to the West, conveys a sense of the manifold restrictions placed on present-day Orthodox communities.[96] For example, the appeal laments: "We do not have a single work that expounds the dogmatic and moral teaching of the Orthodox church, not a single catechism. . . . We do not have any theological or religious libraries available to believers. . . . The students at the three remaining seminaries and two academies of the Russian Orthodox Church learn theology from books and manuals published long before the 1917 Revolution. . . ." The appeal continues:

We lack the possibility of catechizing those who prepare to receive baptism at an adult age. We do not have the possibility of teaching the rudiments of the Christian faith to the children of believers. The law prohibits Sunday schools and youth circles for children, where they would be taught Holy Scripture and liturgical chants. Also forbidden are summer camps for believing children and all other forms of religious education within the community, except within the family.

Regarding parish life, the appeal complains:

We do not have, beyond religious services, the slightest occasion to communicate with fellow parishioners; there are no general meetings of the parishes; no common meals on feast days; no discussion of current events of concern to Christians; no showing of films, and so forth. Christians gather in church solely to pray and to receive the sacraments.

The appeal underlines the frustration felt by believers who lack any influence in their own parishes:

In practice, we do not even have the possibility of healing our parishes. The affairs of the parish are conducted by certain persons under the direction of the warden [starosta], *who is approved and, as a rule, imposed by the local authorities. . . . We are unable to make use freely of the sums of money collected in the parishes. . . . The considerable sums which are collected by the Russian Orthodox Church, as well as the church's property, are by law considered government property and are permanently under the state's control.*

An unsigned letter from a Russian priest to the organizers of the June 1988 Local Council noted that at the local level "the struggle with religion is de facto carried out by command-administrative methods: being fired from one's place of work, albeit under a different pretext; being demoted; being deprived of a prize; being bumped from line for a new apartment; receiving humiliating public 'workings over' at aktivs and general meetings, etc." All of this, the priest warned, "has led to the creation of a multi-million reserve of discontented people within our society."[97]

Orthodox writers point out that the situation in the provinces—where most of the Orthodox live—is much worse than in the capital cities of Moscow and Leningrad. Kirill Golovin, for example, has noted that in the capitals, the authorities become alarmed "only by a long-lived Orthodox circle or by an influential activist," whereas in a provincial city like Tambov, the mere appearance of a new face in church becomes an "extraordinary event" for the local KGB. In the villages, he writes, the position of believers is worse still. The life of country priests is one of hardship and privation, and they are regularly transferred every three or four years by their bishops, at the behest of the local authorities, so that they do not develop roots in the local community.[98] Bessmertnyy-Anzimirov observes that the existence of only one or two Orthodox churches in provincial cities like Novgorod, Kuybyshev, and Perm' makes it easy for local authorities to "monitor" the attendance at those churches. Due to pressure from local officials, he writes, believers often travel to another city in order to receive the sacraments: "I know of cases in which people from Tambov will go to communion in Ryazan',

[95]A. Bessmertnyy-Anzimirov, loc. cit., p. 208.

[96]"Brothers, Help Us!" *Aide aux Croyants de l'URSS*, No. 55, Summer, 1988, pp. 2–7.

[97]See "Some Considerations Concerning the Correction and Betterment of Church Life," *Russkoye Vozrozhdeniye* (New York), No. 43, 1988, pp. 137–38.

[98]Kirill Golovin, "The Day Will Come . . . ," *Vestnik R. Kh. D.*, No. 149, 1987, pp. 237–49. Father Pavlov has confirmed Golovin's assertion that believers living in provincial cities are significantly worse off than those living in Moscow and Leningrad. The *samizdat* journal *Byulleten' Khristyanskoy Obshchestvennosti* offers detailed coverage of religious life in the provinces.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and people from Penza, to Saratov, while Kharkovites will travel to Moscow."[99]

Bessmertnyy-Anzimirov also writes that the position of Orthodoxy in Kiev, which once rivaled the Orthodox communities of Moscow and Leningrad in vitality, now resembles that of other provincial cities: ". . . the closing of the Kiev Pecherska Lavra [in the early 1960's] as well as the closing of the Orthodox seminary in Kiev, and the insane blindness of the Ukrainian [party] leadership during the Brezhnev era have served to weaken the independent Orthodox movement in Ukraine to the point where the initiative there will probably pass in the future to the Greek Catholics. . . . Will the spiritual center of Ukraine henceforth be Catholic L'viv, or will Orthodox Kiev be reborn to new life? It is not given to us to know."[100]

The Moscow Patriarchate. The approximately 80 bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate have been handpicked by the CRA and carefully vetted by the KGB, and the six permanent members of the Holy Synod have presumably been approved at the Politburo level. As befits men accustomed to taking orders, they have attempted to respond with alacrity to the new wind blowing from the Kremlin, a wind that, moreover, promised in some ways to improve the position of the Russian Orthodox Church. Even so, a number of them have apparently had difficulties adapting themselves to the "new thinking." According to a version circulating among Orthodox dissenters, Gorbachev criticized the Patriarch during their April 29, 1988, meeting "for the fact that the church was not asking for anything." Gleb Anishchenko, co-editor of the samizdat religio-philosophical journal *Vybor* has commented: "Indeed the church itself—that is, the upper hierarchy—is not asking for anything and is not doing anything but is satisfied with whatever the state offers it."[101]

A striking example of the church leadership's passivity was its reaction to an offer made by Kharchev during the Millennium celebrations. On that occasion, Kharchev announced that the church could have its own newspaper.[102] But Metropolitan Pitirim of Volokolamsk and Yur'yev, the head of the Patriarchate's publications department, reportedly declined the offer. This action understandably sat poorly with Orthodox dissenters, such as Father Gleb Yakunin, who declared: "If Kharchev said it openly, in public, that means that the question of a newspaper had already been decided. . . . This [Pitirim's reaction] makes a monstrous, terrible impression on us." Sergey Grigoryants, an Orthodox layman and editor of the *samizdat* publication *Glasnost',* added: "Metropolitan Pitirim explained that it was very difficult with limited means to organize the publication of a newspaper. One must say that the publications department of the Patriarchate has a staff of 150, which is significantly larger than the staff of many newspapers in the Soviet Union, not to speak of émigré newspapers abroad."[103]

In general, *glasnost'* and democratization have not penetrated into the upper reaches of the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church. Regular readers of the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* attest that its contents remain dull and pedestrian—in contrast to *Nauka i Religiya,* which has become a lively publication—although the draconian censorship to which the former remains subject no doubt accounts somewhat for its greyness. Similarly, democratization has been kept at arm's length from the process of selecting church representatives. Delegates to the June 1988 Local Council were, for example, selected in the following way:

---

[99]A. Bessmertnyy-Anzimirov, loc. cit., pp. 211–12.

[100]The situation of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine is especially complex. An estimated 4 million believers are actually underground Eastern rite Catholics (also known as Uniates), who are loyal to the Vatican. The Uniates have been a proscribed religious body since 1946. Since 1987 there has been a very active lay movement in Western Ukraine advocating the legalization of the Ukrainian church and some of its clergy and laymen have come out of the underground and held services openly. (See, e.g., the No. 24, 1989, issue of *Moscow News.*) Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev, Exarch of Ukraine, has vigorously opposed the legalization of the Uniate Church, while Pope John Paul II has been urging the Moscow Patriarchate and the Soviet government to allow Ukrainian Catholics a legal existence. See *The Washington Post,* June 24, 1989. Moreover, in February 1989, an "Initiative Committee for the Restoration of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church" was formed in Kiev. The founding members of this committee seek to bring back to life the church that was liquidated in the 1930's and forcibly amalgamated with the Russian Orthodox Church. Like the Uniates, this body has been proscribed in the postwar period. See Bohdan Nahaylo, "Initiative Group for Restoration of Ukrainian Orthodox Church Founded," *Report on the USSR,* Mar. 3, 1989, pp. 24–27.

The recently-formed Popular Front of Moldavia has likewise called for the establishment of an Moldavian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. See Vladimir Socor, "Popular Front Founded in Moldavia," ibid., June 9, 1989, p. 26. The informal Belorussian group *Talaka* has advocated the reestablishment of both the Belorussian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and the Belorussian Catholic (Eastern rite) Church. See Roman Solchanyk, "Belorussian Informal Groups Criticized for Nationalism," *Radio Liberty Research,* RL491/88, Nov. 3, 1988, p. 2.

[101]Father Victor Potapov, Voice of America, "Moskovskaya Beseda, Posvyashchennaya 1000-Letiyu Kreshcheniya Rusi (Moscow Colloquium Devoted to the 1000th Anniversary of the Baptism of Rus')," June 11, 1988, unpublished manuscript, p. 22. Kharchev, on the other hand, has claimed that Pimen and the permanent members of the Holy Synod did make requests of Gorbachev when they met at the Kremlin. See "Law and Conscience," *Ogonek,* No. 50, 1988, p. 5.

[102]For Kharchev's statement, see "In Honor of the Millennium," *Literaturnaya Gazeta,* June 8, 1988, p. 1.

[103]See Father Victor Potapov, "Moskovskaya Beseda . . . ," p. 24, and idem, "Khronika Prazdnovaniya . . . ," p. 35. Recently, however, the church did accept the state's offer of a newspaper. The weekly *Moskovskiy Tserkovnyy Vestnik* (Moscow Church Herald) began appearing in April 1989. On this, see the interview with Metropolitan Vladimir of Rostov in *Izvestiya,* Apr. 29, 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In each diocese, a meeting took place that was conducted by the local bishop. Candidates to be sent to the Council were not elected; rather, they were nominated by the person conducting the meeting. A CRA official was present at all these meetings, i.e., a person having absolutely no relation to church life. The candidates who were nominated had been agreed on with the CRA representatives in advance. At the meetings, there was no discussion of the nominees, and no alternative candidates were put forward. The qualifications of the nominees were not discussed.[104]

Even so, the hand-picked Local Council delegates made some improvements in the church's position. In addition to canonizing nine new Russian Orthodox saints,[105] the Council adopted a new statute (*Ustav*), drafted by a team headed by Archbishop Kirill of Smolensk and Vyaz'ma. The new statute, whose text was cleared in advance with the CRA, declares all Orthodox churches, monasteries, and diocesan centers to be "legal entities," and it rescinds the onerous restrictions on the activities of parish priests approved by the bishops in 1961 at the demand of state authorities.[106] The delegates to the Council introduced some changes into Archbishop Kirill's draft: for example, future local councils are to be held every five years (the draft had said every 10) and a bishops' council is to be held every two years (the draft had said five). One potential effect of these changes will be to dilute the power of the permanent members of the Holy Synod.[107]

Beginning in the spring of 1988, the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate has moved to expand the church's activities along the lines indicated by the *Kommunist* editorial. In an interview appearing in *Izvestiya* on Orthodox Holy Saturday in 1988, Patriarch Pimen called for an expansion of charitable work by Orthodox believers. "The sisters of our convents," he said, "could, for example, serve in hospitals where there are seriously ill people, could work in homes for the disabled and invalids."[108] Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev, Exarch of Ukraine, also now advocates charitable work, but in exchange for offering this useful service to the state, he has been allowed to criticize anti-religious "individual work with believers." "It is one thing," Metropolitan Filaret declared, "to carry out educational work through the giving of lectures, publication of books, etc. But when they begin to 'work over' a believer in public, when they insult everything which is sacred to him . . . then what kind of respect is that!"[109]

In his address to the June 1988 Local Council, Metropolitan Vladimir of Rostov called for "raising old-age pensions for the clergy, setting up homes for the elderly, training church workers, centralizing church reconstruction and repair work, and providing the necessary conditions, especially in the cloisters, for the training of icon painters, restorers, and church architects." He suggested expanding the church's publication activities and "in every way encouraging parishioners to engage in charitable work, mutual assistance, and care for the sick."[110]

In an interview with Aleksandr Nezhnyy, Metropolitan Aleksiy of Leningrad likewise urged expanded charitable work by believers and called for an increase in the church's publication activities.[111] On the thorny issue of religious education, he said that a parish priest should be able to explain the foundations of the Orthodox faith and the meaning of the church services during meetings with believers held in the church (but not, apparently, outside the church). He also stated that parents should be able to invite a priest to their homes in order to instruct their children in religion, but he shied away from the subject of Sunday schools. (Since most Orthodox parishes are large, a priest obviously does not have time to provide individual religious instruction to children.)

In March 1989, four leading hierarchs of the Russian Church were elected to the Congress of People's Deputies. Patriarch Pimen gained election as a nominee of the Soviet Peace Committee; Metropolitan Pitirim of Volokolamsk, as a nominee of the Soviet Cultural Foundation; Metropolitan Aleksiy of Leningrad, as a nominee of the Foundation for Charity and Health; and Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev (I do not know at present which organization placed him on its list of nominees).

[104]In Father Potapov, "Khronika Prazdnovaniya . . . ," p. 15.

[105]Notably absent from their number was Father John of Kronstadt (d. 1908), who is universally venerated as a saint by present-day Russian Orthodox Christians, and the so-called "new Russian martyrs"—the millions of believers who died for their religious convictions under the Bolsheviks. (The "new martyrs" and Father John of Kronstadt have been canonized by an émigré ecclesiastical body, the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, and icons of them can be found in the homes of many Soviet believers.)

[106]See "Excursus: The Council of Bishops of 1961" in Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church*, pp. 53–69. Presumably the legal status of the Russian Orthodox Church will have to be confirmed in the pending legislation on religious bodies in order to become operative.

[107]*Ustav ob Upravlenii Russkoy Pravoslavnoy Tserkvi* (Statute on the Administration of the Russian Orthodox Church), Moscow, Moscow Patriarchate, 1988. I have a copy of the draft statute with handwritten corrections made by a participant in the Council.

[108]"The Millennium," *Izvestiya*, Apr. 9, 1988.

[109]"To Love Man," *Ogonek*, No. 22, 1988, p. 16. See also the interview with Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev, "One History, One Fatherland," *Trud*, June 5, 1988.

[110]*Press Release* [of the Moscow Patriarchate], English edition, No. 6, June 8, 1988, p. 1.

[111]"To the Baptism of Rus'—A Thousand Years," *Druzhba Narodov* (Moscow), No. 6, 1988, pp. 200–09.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Moscow Patriarchate has thus attempted to respond to the new Gorbachev line on the engagement of "patriotic" religious institutions in public life. The advent of *glasnost',* however, has also permitted us to hear the voices of Orthodox priests, deacons, seminarians, and lay believers, whose views, as we shall see, often do not mirror those of the hierarchy.

The believers. As in the area of nationality policy, so in religious matters, the Gorbachev reforms have had unintended consequences. One effect of *glasnost'* has been to expose the chasm separating the docile Moscow Patriarchate from an increasingly restive clergy and laity. As indicated earlier, part of this new restiveness has stemmed from the fact that both the clergy and laity are better educated today.

A meeting in December 1987 of the students and faculty of the Moscow Theological Academy (located in Zagorsk) with two high-ranking CRA officials, Genrikh Mikhaylov, head of the CRA's Orthodox Church department, and Tat'yana Belokobyl'skaya, head of its legal department, provides a telling example of the differences in attitude between the hierarchs and the lower clergy. A tape recording of the meeting was subsequently leaked to the West, and the transcript appeared in *Russkaya Mysl'*.[112]

During the meeting, CRA official Mikhaylov was at pains to underline his sympathy for the church: "I tell you that I, as head of the Russian Church Department, reflect at night, I suffer, I write memos . . . ." Mikhaylov declared himself in favor of raising the social prestige of the clergy: "We consider that, of course, the priest should be given more rights, and his authority should be raised . . . ." The CRA, he revealed, had of late been so generous toward the Russian Church as to anger other religious denominations: "They tell us: 'You're giving everything to the Russian Church—the Danilov Monastery, Optina Pustyn', the Tolgskiy Convent, you're giving them churches!' The Baptists are becoming upset with us; so are the Old Believers."

Unimpressed, Mikhaylov's audience plied him with sharp questions. One participant asked why it was that when a teacher transferred from a state school to the teaching staff of a seminary, his income tax rate went up from 10 percent to 30 percent. Mikhaylov's explanation that a seminary instructor, unlike a school teacher, "does not participate in social production" went down poorly with his audience, and this induced him to add: "We have to rethink our tax policy toward the church's cadres."

Another questioner asked why, as Aleksandr Nezhnyy had revealed in *Moscow News,* believers in Kirov had to appeal 50 times, in vain, to get permission to open a new church. Mikhaylov replied that it was "disappointing and sad that we brought the matter to publication. (Laughter in the hall.) I am very disappointed. The matter could have been resolved less painfully, but, no, we had to bring it to the attention of the West. . . ." It was clear that many in the hall assumed that the CRA was continuing to persecute the church while paying lip service to the new liberal line. When, for example, Mikhaylov sought to lay the blame for maltreatment of believers at the foot of local CRA officials, he was asked: "But whose officials are they?" He answered lamely that they were indeed officials of the CRA but had been appointed by local soviets.

One speaker raised the ticklish subject of the church's automatic endorsement of the policies of the Soviet state: "It was said here that a priest must as much as possible show himself to be a social activist, a citizen, and that there must be cooperation, a kind of alliance with the state." But the speaker suggested that priests need to be less concerned with limiting long-range missiles and more involved in such matters as catechizing adult believers preparing for baptism.

Still another speaker asked: "The believer cannot get hold of the Bible or of recordings of church hymns. How are we to counter the well-armed onslaught of atheism?" Mikhaylov chose to answer by criticizing the vulgarity and coarseness of atheistic propaganda, but Belokobyl'skaya, head of the CRA's legal department, took a tougher approach. She stated that those in the audience should not be disturbed by the fact that, according to the constitution, atheists are guaranteed the right of propaganda, while believers have only the right to attend church services. After all, she declared, "the very existence of the church is also propaganda." She also referred to the "great popularity" of the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* (a disingenuous statement, given its limited print run and dullness).

Concerning the catechizing of adult believers, Belokobyl'skaya said that if an adult wanted to learn about religion, he had the option of attending a seminary. On the subject of Sunday schools, she was particularly adamant. Irritated by the fact that the students kept returning to this topic, she finally declared in exasperation: "As for, once again, the question of educating children [in religion], punishment according to the law is foreseen by the Criminal Code of the RSFSR and the other union republics for the systematic teaching of religion to children and for the organization of religious schools for them."

---

[112]"Stenogram of the Meeting in the Moscow Theological Academy (December 1987)," *Russkaya Mysl',* Mar. 18, 1988, insert supplement, pp. I–IV.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This restriction on religious instruction was roundly condemned by Deacon Georgiy Kochetkov during the course of a round-table discussion organized by the journal *Vek XX i Mir*:

In her present condition, the church cannot work effectively for our society. . . . The church must have the possibility of independent gathering at every level—from the parish level to the All-Russian Local Council—and must be able to discuss all her problems without the permission of the state authorities. No state official should have the right to interfere in the nomination of clergy, in church life, in the organization of congregations and parishes, dioceses, monasteries, libraries, special theological schools and colleges, as well as other institutions—for children, women, and for the promotion of science, education, or charity, etc.—whatever believers need for the complete realization of their religious life. The church must be able to enter hospitals, prisons, alms-houses, the army, etc. The right to disseminate information is necessary for the church.[113]

Behind the restive clergy, there is a restive laity, many of whom have higher education, and some of whom have spent time in prison and in the Gulag for their beliefs. Dissenter Zoya Krakhmal'nikova, for example, was released from the camps in July 1987—without being amnestied—having served in full a five-year sentence for editing a religious *samizdat* journal, *Nadezhda*. The central problem of present-day church life, she believes, is that the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate, whom she terms "government statesmen" and "a unique kind of *nomenklatura*,"[114] do not represent or defend the real interests of the church. The heart of the problem, in her opinion, lies in Metropolitan Sergiy's famous "Declaration of Loyalty" of 1927, in which the then-head of the church declared that the "joys and successes" of the Soviet regime were those of the Orthodox Church.[115] This shameful capitulation, Krakhmal'nikova believes, led inevitably to the emergence of "political Christianity" in the church and to the practice of telling gargantuan lies to the West: "Our itinerant bishops travel to the West . . . in order to tell of the 'freedom' of the church, in order to bear false witness . . . ."[116]

Four laymen joined Fathers Gleb Yakunin and Nikolay Gaynov in addressing an open letter to Patriarch Pimen asking him to retire. "Your weaknesses," they told the Patriarch, "are profitable only to those who do not wish an authentic recovery of the church. . . ." An energetic patriarch is needed, they maintained, to press for reopening of the Orthodox churches and monasteries closed down under Khrushchev, and for an opening of new Orthodox seminaries in locations such as Belorussia and Siberia.[117] When, in early 1988, Archbishop Feodosiy of Astrakhan' wrote an open letter to Gorbachev requesting that the Kiev Pecherska Lavra be reopened, Orthodox lay dissenter Aleksandr Ogorodnikov wrote that "he [Feodosiy] revives the charisma, which has been lost by our bishops, of condemning social evil."[118]

Another issue frequently raised by the dissenters has been the historical "blank spot" represented by concealment of the persecution of the church under the Bolsheviks. Complained Krakhmal'nikova: "Today the Communists are canonizing the martyrs of their ideas. Today we learn that there was persecution in all spheres of our public life. . . . Our hierarchy claims that only in our church was there no persecution. . . ."[119] Aleksandr Nezhnyy, too, asks: "Why not honor the memory of the church martyrs who died in Stalin's camps?"[120]

During the celebrations of the Millennium in June 1988, Metropolitan Yuvenaliy of Krutitsy stated that the "new Russian martyrs" had not been added to the list of Orthodox saints, because the Patriarchate leadership had not wanted to introduce "political emotions" into the festivities.[121] Similarly, in his address to the Local Council in June 1988, Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev had stated that ". . . the people of the church shared the fate of their fellow citizens," implying that there had been no special persecution of the church by the communists.[122] Such statements have been regarded with repugnance and outrage by Orthodox dissenters.

[113]See "Dialogue for the Benefit of Humankind," *Twentieth Century and Peace*, No. 7, 1988, p. 43. I have modified the English-language translation to make it more readable.

[114]Zoya Krakhmal'nikova, "The Bitter Fruits of Sweet Captivity," *Russkaya Mysl'*, Jan. 20, 1989. The article continues in ensuing issues of *Russkaya Mysl'*.

[115]For the text of Metropolitan Sergiy's "Declaration of Loyalty," see Matthew Spinka, *The Church in Soviet Russia*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1956, pp. 161–65.

[116]In Father Potapov, "Moskovskaya Beseda . . . ," pp. 19, 17.

[117]Published in *Russkaya Mysl'*, Apr. 1, 1988, p. 1.

[118]Ibid., Jan. 15, 1988, p. 12. An Orthodox priest in an unsigned letter to the June 1988 Local Council complained that "the key positions in the church are occupied by the very worst of her members—people who suffer from worldliness, careerism, corruption, greed, lack of principles . . . ." See "Some Considerations Concerning the Correction and Betterment of Church Life," *Russkoye Vozrozhdeniye*, No. 43, 1988, p. 136.

[119]In Father Victor Potapov, "Moskovskaya Beseda . . . ," p. 12.

[120]"The Millennium," *Moscow News*, No. 25, 1988, p. 16.

[121]Metropolitan Yuvenaliy's words are cited approvingly by Anatoliy Salutskiy in *Literaturnaya Rossiya*, Dec. 23, 1988.

[122]Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev and Galicia, "Tysyacheletiye Kreshcheniya Rusi" (The Millenium of the Baptism of Rus'), text of address to the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, June 6–9, 1988, p. 91.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The activities of the Orthodox dissenters and of the many intellectuals who sympathize with them have not gone down well with the CRA or with the Moscow Patriarchate leadership. In an interview appearing in the No. 11, 1987, issue of *Nauka i Religiya,* Kharchev complained: "A certain part of the clergy and of the laity who follow after them try to make use of the policies of expanding *glasnost'* and democracy in order to receive special prerogatives and, often, to make attacks on the basic legislation on cults and to infringe the Constitution of the USSR. For them, freedom of conscience means unlimited religious activity . . . ." Patriarch Pimen likewise assailed "the spiritual wandering of some of our priests and lay people, who sow the seeds of discord and temptation in the church." Such people, he said, "oppose themselves to the fullness of the church," and "a strict pastoral approach" is needed toward them.[123]

If the policy of *glasnost'* continues in effect, the pressure from below on the church hierarchy is likely to grow. Sentiment will increase to retire many of the present bishops and replace them with those, such as Archbishop Feodosiy of Astrakhan' and Archbishop Khrisostom of Irkutsk, who would press actively for the reopening of thousands of churches and scores of monasteries, for the establishment of Sunday schools, and for the other goals sought by Orthodox believers.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the peculiar dynamics of official policy toward the Russian Orthodox Church during the Gorbachev period has resulted from the interplay and struggle among four separate groups: liberals, centrists, and conservatives within the Communist Party, and an intelligentsia (some of whom are party members) increasingly favorably inclined toward religion. Assuming that Gorbachev maintains his position, he should soon be able to move ahead vigorously with the program outlined in the unsigned essay, "Socialism and Religion," which appeared in the No. 4, 1988, issue of *Kommunist.* The objections of party conservatives and the foot-dragging of party centrists should gradually be overcome, as many of the advocates of these positions are removed from office.

Gorbachev's alteration of the regime's approach to religion has arisen from the perceived need to enlist religious believers, and especially those who are Russian Orthodox, in his program of *perestroyka,* and to use all available resources on its behalf. In his off-the-record remarks at the Higher Party School in Moscow in March 1988, Konstantin Kharchev, chairman of the CRA, noted that there is presently a catastrophic shortage of junior medical personnel in Soviet hospitals. "Let them [i.e., the believers] carry out the bedpans," Kharchev commented to his audience.[124] The press was quick to take up this issue of charitable work.[125] At a certain point, it apparently occurred to the party leadership that it made good sense to encourage religious believers to undertake this menial work. Before this could happen, however, Soviet law, which forbids believers to engage in charitable work, would have to be changed.

In addition to encouraging believers to help solve the "bedpan problem," the Gorbachev leadership has emphasized the numerous social services already being provided by religious organizations to the Soviet state. In his pathbreaking interview in the No. 11, 1987, issue of *Nauka i Religiya,* Kharchev underlined that the registered religious bodies in the Soviet Union "strive to integrate the socialist ideal into their theological doctrines and exhibit a readiness for active and multidimensional cooperation in both foreign and domestic politics. . . ." Specific examples of domestic services followed: "The church condemns such negative phenomena as drug addiction and criminality, alcoholism and drunkenness; it speaks out on behalf of the preservation of monuments of national culture, the strengthening of the family; and it supports cleaning up the surrounding environment. And this activity is not limited to sermons. The church donated more than 3 million rubles to help the victims of the Chernobyl' accident, and contributions continue to come in. It annually donates 30 million rubles to the Peace Fund and about 5 million rubles to the Foundation for the Preservation of Cultural Monuments. It also annually donates about 45 million rubles for the reconstruction and restoration of cult

[123]For Kharchev's comments, see "Guarantees of Freedom," *Nauka i Religiya,* No. 11, 1987, p. 22; for the Patriarch's, see "The Millennium," *Izvestiya,* Apr. 9, 1988. One recalls that when Father Gleb Yakunin was reinstated as an Orthodox priest in 1987, he was given a stern warning from the scriptures on the pages of the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* (No. 7, 1987): "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you."

[124]"Religion and *Perestroyka,* loc. cit.

[125]In an interview with the trade union newspaper *Trud,* Anatoliy Solov'yev, chief doctor of the Sixth City Hospital in Moscow, reported that instead of the authorized 304 junior medical personnel on his staff, he had only 127 and that he would gladly have religious believers make up the difference. On the regime's changing policies toward charitable work by religious believers, see Oxana Antic, "Around the Prohibition for the Church to Engage in Charitable Activity," *Radio Svoboda: Materialy Issledovatel'skogo Otdela* (Munich), RS 39/88, Apr. 19, 1988; idem, "On the Future Role of the Russian Orthodox Church in Public Life in the Soviet Union," *Radio Liberty Research,* RL 407/88, Sept. 6, 1988; and idem, "The Charity Program and the Role of the Churches," ibid., RL 516/88, Nov. 22, 1988.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

buildings [churches, mosques, synagogues]. . . ."[126]

The new message of Gorbachev and his followers appears to be this: the church has been doing a great deal to build up and strengthen the Soviet state, and the state is grateful for these services. Now the state permits, indeed encourages, the church to expand its efforts into the area of charitable work.

This more tolerant, albeit utilitarian, attitude also owes something to Gorbachev's foreign policy calculations. In a recent discussion of the long-delayed new Soviet legislation on religion, CRA chairman Kharchev noted that, along with the Ministry of Justice, the USSR Procuracy, and the CRA, the Foreign Ministry was consulted during the preparation of the new laws.[127] While upon initial consideration this may appear odd, it actually makes good political sense. The application of "new political thinking" to Soviet foreign policy has, as is well-known, led to a desire for improved relations with the West. Détente with the West has meant that the West's traditional concern with human and religious rights in the USSR had to be addressed. Gorbachev and his followers have moved energetically to shore up this important front.

One significant initiative in this regard has been the formation of a Soviet Human Rights Commission, with clergy as members, under the chairmanship of Gorbachev's close adviser, Fedor Burlatskiy.[128] The commission has pressed for the amnesty of all prisoners sentenced under Article 142 (the violation of laws on the separation of church and state and of the school and the church) and Article 227 (the infringement of the person and rights of Soviet citizens under guise of performing religious rituals) of the RSFSR Criminal Code, or the appropriate article in the criminal codes of the union republics. In addition to this initiative, there have been several amnesties of political and religious prisoners, many of whom were well-known in the West.[129]

What are the chances for success of the new sophisticated program outlined in the journal *Kommunist*? Will the state be able, as Gorbachev and others apparently think it will, to ingest and gradually absorb religious believers? One recalls that on the two previous occasions when the Russian Orthodox Church was given some "breathing room" by the regime—the period of the New Economic Policy in the 1920's and the years 1943–58—it was able to make rapid advances and visibly to strengthen its position. Each of these was succeeded by periods of anti-religious pressure. One should not, consequently, rule out the appearance of yet another anti-religious campaign designed to roll back the advances achieved by believers during, say, the years 1987–89.[130] But if no such persecution should occur, then the advances of religion during the coming decade are likely to be manifold and striking.

[126]"Guarantees of Freedom," *Nauka i Religiya*, No. 11, 1987, p. 22.

[127]See "The Law and Conscience," loc. cit., p. 5.

[128]On the Burlatskiy Commission, see *Izvestiya*, Feb. 12, 1988; and Viktor Yasmann, "An Official Human Rights Organization in the USSR: 'New Thinking' or Propaganda?" *Radio Liberty Research*, RL 10/88, Jan. 12, 1988.

[129]See Bill Keller, "Soviets May Free Religious Prisoners," *The New York Times*, Aug. 10, 1988. Among those released were 43 Christian and 10 Jewish activists; see also " 'A Humane Act'," *Religion in Communist Lands*, Summer 1987, pp. 193–95.

[130]A number of Orthodox believers with whom I spoke during my June 1989 visit to the Soviet Union predicted that the Communist Party would soon launch a new anti-religious campaign. The appointment by Gorbachev of a reputed hard-liner, Khristoradnov, to head the CRA may indicate that the General Secretary wants to slow down the momentum of the religious renaissance. In an article published in the June 15, 1989, issue of *Sovetskaya Kul'tura*, Sergey Averintsev, a believer and an elected member of the Congress of People's Deputies, expressed a concern that the removal of Kharchev might signal "a return to the former [anti-religious] policy."

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books

Islamic Radicalism

Shahrough Akhavi

OLIVIER ROY. *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986.

HENRY MUNSON, JR. *Islam and Revolution in the Middle East.* New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1988.

EMMANUEL SIVAN. *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics.* New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1985.

MILITANT Islamic groups burst into prominence on the Middle Eastern political scene in the 1970's. In Iran, a radical Islamic movement, led by the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, effected a revolution with the avowed intention of establishing a theocracy. Other radical Islamic organizations have been active in Afghanistan (where they have fought both the Marxist-Leninist regime in Kabul and the Soviet occupiers), in Lebanon, and in Egypt. The works under review, although different in many respects, share a concern with radical Islam. These works also show that although the salience of radical ideology might be declining in other parts of the world, radical Islam retains an attraction for some disaffected elements of Muslim societies.

Islamic radicals insist on the inextricability of religion and politics in the Islamic world view and attempt to uphold the unity of theory and practice in Islam, using violence, if necessary, to achieve their goals. Islamic radicalism, then, represents what may be termed a "militant orthopraxy." Radicals maintain that the Islamic doctrine of salvation calls for the creation of a community of believers in this world and obligates believers to strengthen and enlarge that community. By contrast, attempting to fulfill God's commandments as a private individual retards the realization of salvation and therefore may be seen as a derogation of Islam.

In examining radical groups having modernist concerns, Olivier Roy focuses on Afghanistan, although he makes brief references to Iran and Pakistan. Roy applies to these groups the neologism "Islamist," which denotes an Islam oriented toward action. (For Roy, the word "Islam" itself carries the standard ethico-cultural connotations.) Henry Munson reluctantly uses the word "fundamentalist," *faute de mieux,* in treating Islamic radicalism in Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. Emmanuel Sivan prefers the word "radical." His work concentrates on Egypt, although he devotes some attention to Lebanon and Syria.

The approaches of these works also differ. Roy—an anthropologist—examines both ideas and organization, and in large measure, his analysis relies on field research that he conducted over a five-year period. Munson—also an anthropologist—synthesizes the secondary literature on his topic. Sivan's book is an essay on the history of ideas, with only passing (although at times informative) treatment of the organization and structure of Islamic radical groups.

ROY'S analysis of the Afghan Islamists shows that they seek to use modern institutions, such as political parties, and science and technology to vindicate the eternal verities of Islamic revelation. The Islamists—men of action—have joined with the clergy—professional men of religion—to resist the Marxist-Leninist regime in Kabul and its Soviet supporters. The cler-

Shahrough Akhavi is Professor in the Department of Government and International Studies at the University of South Carolina, (Columbia, SC). He is the author of Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran: Clergy-State Relations in the Pahlavi Period, *as well as numerous articles in such journals as* Comparative Studies in Society and History, The Middle East Journal, Middle Eastern Studies, Iranian Studies, Current History, *and* SAIS Review.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gy and the Islamists have also sought to provide the Afghan people with functions normally provided by the state, namely certain public services such as medical care and security.

Interestingly, Roy draws distinctions between the Islamists and the clergy. The clergy have managed to revive a flagging institutional Islam as a consequence of their interaction with Sufi groups, notably the Naqshbandi order. This interaction is ironic in light of the traditional antipathy between the Sufis and the clergy throughout the lands of Islam. Vestiges of the Naqshbandi are also found in Soviet Central Asia. Hence, Moscow's support for the Marxist-Leninist regime in Kabul and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan may have been prompted by alarm over the possible spread of a reinvigorated Islam inside Soviet borders.

As an anthropologist, Roy seeks to assess the social consequences of prolonged resistance to the Marxist-Leninist regime and the Soviet army of occupation. He argues that as a result of this resistance effort, the clergy-Islamist coalition succeeded in bringing about political modernization in Afghanistan. This unexpected conclusion recalls Marx's argument that British rule in India brought that country into the stream of modern history. A non-Marxist variant of this view may be found in the writings of Samuel Huntington, who posited more than two decades ago that revolution can bring about political modernization and thus be functionally positive from the perspective of development theory.[1] But whereas Huntington dealt with communist regimes that take power as a consequence of revolution and then—from his perspective—forcibly develop society, Roy is suggesting that development, or political modernization, is achieved through resistance to communist rule.

Of course, it may be argued that unity is not the same as political modernization. That is, even if one concedes that the Afghan people have become more united as a consequence of Kabul's and Moscow's actions (which may not be the case, given the fragmentation of the resistance), does unity coincide with modernity? Roy's assumption that it does appears to be based on the work of the nation-building theorists of the 1950's and 1960's, which suggested that higher levels of mobilization and improvements in communications bring about modernity and development.[2] Experience has shown, however, that mobilization and modern communications do not necessarily result in greater unity. Consequently, should the Afghan resistance topple the Kabul regime, it is not certain that the Muslims' enhanced unity will last. Roy believes that if a neutral Afghanistan does finally emerge, the relationship between state and society will have inevitably changed, and that therefore the historic gap between civil society and the state that has characterized Afghanistan since 1747 will have been bridged.[3] Perhaps so, but given a number of counter-examples (Lebanon, Yugoslavia, Sri Lanka), one cannot be confident about such an outcome.

Theoretical assessments aside, Roy's book is immensely valuable for its pioneering examination of the various resistance groups, the social bases of their support, and their beliefs. Roy provides information on all of the significant guerrilla groups and examines the similarities and differences among them. The book is surely the authoritative account of the activities of the Afghan mujahedin in the 1979–85 period.

MUNSON'S work argues against the notion that rapid modernization of the social order is sufficient to produce revolution. In some respects, his book may be seen as a warning against the oversimplified analyses that appeared in the international media (but not among reputable scholars) after the Iranian revolution. Briefly put, this interpretation held that overly hasty efforts at modernizing Iranian society led to the downfall of the Shah and the overthrow of the monarchical system. Munson acknowledges that rapid socio-economic modernization was disruptive, but he maintains that it was only a necessary, rather than a sufficient, cause of the Islamic revolution in Iran.

[1]See Karl Marx, "The British Rule in India," in Lewis S. Feuer, Ed., *Marx and Engels: Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, Garden City, NY, Anchor-Doubleday, 1959, pp. 474–81; and Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1968.

[2]See, for example, Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society*, Glencoe, IL, The Free Press, 1958; Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, MA, The MIT Press, 1966; Gabriel Almond and James S. Coleman, Eds., *The Politics of the Developing Areas*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1960; Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1963; and the works of the Comparative Politics Committee of the Social Science Research Council published in the 1960's by Princeton University Press under the following titles: *Communication and Political Development, Education and Political Development, Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey, Political Culture and Political Development,* and *Political Participation and Political Development.*

[3]Since 1747, the process of state-formation in Afghanistan has been long and arduous. The major difficulty has been the tribal nature of Afghan society. As successive ruling dynasties and, after 1973, republican regimes have tried to construct and consolidate a state order, their efforts have met with indifferent success. Centralizing policies of these elites have been resisted, and governmental efforts to extend state authority by policies of taxation, conscription, allocation, and penetration have foundered because of the fierce autonomy of tribal groups residing in the periphery. Hence, the Afghan state has continued to be perceived by many such groups as an intrusive, if not always a hostile, force.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

To Munson's mind, a host of preconditions led to the emergence of the revolutionary movement in Iran. As Munson discusses these factors, he notes that they have also been present in other countries with active Islamic radical movements. Such factors include rapid economic growth (Saudi Arabia), substantial rural-urban migration (Saudi Arabia and Egypt), quickly increasing literacy rates (Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria), intensified demands for political participation (Syria and Egypt), and mounting resentment over cultural imperialism (Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria). Yet, in none of these countries has an Islamic revolution occurred.

Munson argues that the following factors made the Iranian case different: President Jimmy Carter's human rights policies, which despite Washington's consistent support for the Shah, emboldened Iranian counter-elites; the Shah's inconsistent responses to the mounting opposition to his rule; the Ayatollah Khomeini's charisma and Shi'ite themes of martyrdom, legitimacy of authority, and the mythos of the messianic Imam;[4] and effective use of organizational networks manned by the Shi'ite clergy at critical junctures in the revolutionary process.

Intriguingly, Munson does not examine the Afghan case, which provides another example where government policies tearing the social fabric of society ended in revolution. Moreover, Carter's human rights policies did not specifically target Iran, and Islamic radical groups in other countries with which the United States had close ties (for example, Egypt) heard the same message. Yet, Munson maintains that President Carter's human rights policies were "the most important *precipitating* cause of the Iranian Revolution" (p. 126, emphasis in the original).

Another variable allegedly specific to Iran was inconsistency in elite policies toward the opposition. However, one could argue that Anwar Sadat was inconsistent in his responses to the Egyptian Islamic groups' challenges. In 1970, when Sadat succeeded to the presidency, he allowed the Muslim Brotherhood broader room for maneuver in order to widen his base of support, yet he refused to legalize it outright. (This despite the fact that the Brotherhood, established in 1928 and the largest of any of the Islamic groups by far, did not advocate the use of violence to restore the rule of Islamic law.) Then Sadat permitted the Muslim Brotherhood to run on a combined slate with the New Wafd Party in the 1976 elections and gave it expanded discretion to publish its own journals: *al-Da'wah, al-Mukhtar al-Islami,* and *al-I'tisam.* He permitted Islamic associations to organize for the student elections in various Egyptian universities and then annulled the election results in 1979 when the associations did so well. Sadat decided to make peace with Israel and to expand opportunities for direct foreign investment in Egypt, knowing that these moves would engender opposition among the Islamic radicals. When such opposition in fact mounted in 1980 and 1981, Sadat ordered the arrest of these activists and banned the Brotherhood's journals. Yet, no revolution broke out in Egypt.

To be fair, Munson does note that the fragmented nature of the Islamic groups in Egypt was an important factor in the regime's ability to handle their radicalism. But Munson ignores two factors that should be mentioned in explaining why revolution occurred in Iran but not in Egypt. The first is geopolitics. Egypt is fairly flat and has one major river, the Nile. The population of the country tends to cluster along the Nile (as well as in the cities along the Suez Canal). The Egyptian government's ability to control its population is much facilitated by this cardinal physical feature. Iran is very different, with its mountains, plateaus, fertile plains, low country, and semi-desert/desert regions. The Iranian population is not conveniently concentrated along a narrow strip of territory and therefore is not easily penetrable by instruments of state control. Despite the age-old tradition of statecraft and administration associated with its history, Iran has been a difficult country to govern. The second factor is the relative degree of social homogeneity in Egypt, as compared to severe heterogeneity in Iran. This homogeneity also makes it easier for rulers to govern Egyptian society.

SIVAN, like Roy, examines the issues of modernity and modernization as seen through the prism of Islamic radical organizations. However, the groups he examines,

[4]Shi'ite themes of martyrdom refer to the sect's minority status in the Islamic world and the persecutions that they and their leaders, the Imams, have suffered at the hands of the Sunnite Islamic majority. Iranian Shi'ites believe that their leaders, the 12 Imams, are the "proofs" of the existence of God. The Shi'ites hold that God commanded the occultation of the 12th Imam in 874 to avert his assassination by the vengeful Sunnite caliph (leader of the Islamic community). This Imam, it is believed, will remain in hiding until God orders him to return as the Mahdi, the messiah, who will signal the end of tyranny and injustice in the world. According to Shi'ite doctrine, only the Imams are entitled to rule, although in their absence the orders of other leaders may be obeyed, provided their policies are virtuous.

Khomeini argued that secular rulers—especially monarchs—had violated the Imams' principles of justice and that only the clergy could legitimately rule until the return of the Mahdi. Because Khomeini had himself "disappeared," as it were, when the Shah forced him into exile in 1964, many common people apparently had come to believe that he was the Hidden Imam, or at least the "gate" (*bab*) to the latter. Consequently, his bitter denunciations of the Shah's regime in 1964–79 had an incalculable impact in mobilizing support for the revolutionary movement.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

unlike Roy's Islamists, abhor the Western model of modernity. Sivan locates the watershed for Islamic radicalism in the 1950's, for it was at that time that the anti-modernization writings of Abu al-A'la Mawdudi, the Pakistani Muslim, were introduced into Egypt. Sivan thus challenges the facile notion that the roots of Islamic radicalism are in the Iranian revolution of 1978–79, or even in the advent of the Sadat regime in 1970.

In Egypt, the chief proponent of the anti-modernization teachings of Mawdudi was Sayyid Qutb, whose two-year stay in the United States in 1949–51 made him hostile to Western-style modernity. Qutb joined the Muslim Brotherhood upon returning from America and was appointed the director of its propaganda section. The Brotherhood was banned in 1954 when several members tried to murder Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. Qutb was swept up in the arrests following the assassination attempt. He became radicalized in prison, and although later released, he was again arrested, tried, imprisoned, and executed in 1966 on charges of treason.

Qutb is the father of Islamic radicalism in Egypt. Qutb's discourse was studded with references to *jahiliyyah,* an Arabic word that appears in the Koran and refers to the pre-Islamic era in Arabia as "the Age of Ignorance," but which some Islamic radicals apply to "apostate" regimes today. As Sivan shows, Qutb relied on the authority of the famous medieval scholar, ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328) to charge the ruling Egyptian authorities and, by extension, leaders of other Muslim countries, with the most serious accusation imaginable for a Muslim—apostasy from Islam. Qutb eventually came to advocate a jihad (literally, great exertion in the cause of God) against *jahili* Islam.

Qutb rejected Islamic modernism, a movement that began around the turn of the century. Its chief spokesman, the Grand Mufti of Egypt, Muhammad 'Abduh (d. 1905), tried to combine certain Western precepts with Islamic beliefs and practices without sacrificing the core of the Islamic religion. For example, 'Abduh tried to reconcile the Islamic model of rule with democracy by citing K. XLII: 38 ". . . and their affairs are a matter of counsel." But Qutb's commentary on this Koranic verse stipulated that any counsel that the ruler has with members of society should be restricted to the virtuous few "within the general context of God-made laws that the ruler must execute" (p. 73). Qutb pointedly noted the absence of any imperative in the Koran for elections and argued that given the perversions of Western democracy, it was bound to corrupt Islam. He called, instead, for a benign dictatorship.

Qutb did not advocate rule by the clergy, many of whom he suspected of collaboration with the regime. And Qutb favored the exercise of *ijtihad* (one of the classic sources of Islamic law—independent reasoning to deduce a legal ruling) by non-clergymen. In both of these respects—that is, suspicion of the clergy and his call for committed lay persons to exercise *ijtihad,* Qutb was a major influence on Ali Shari'ati, one of the intellectual leaders of the Iranian revolution. (Incidentally, it is odd that Munson, who attaches much significance to Shari'ati's role in the Iranian revolution, does not mention this influence.)

Qutb also deduced the justification for revolution from the classic work of ibn Taymiyyah. Now, the burden of constitutional theory in the Sunni tradition (which embraces about 85 percent of the world's Muslims and is the tradition to which ibn Taymiyyah belongs) is that rebellion must be avoided because it weakens the Islamic community and thus threatens the salvation of the Muslims. But despite the Sunni reluctance to call for rebellion, ibn Taymiyyah argued that the Mongols were apostates from Islam because they continued to adhere to their Yasa code, introduced by Genghis Khan and interpreted by the Mongols to supervene the *Shari'ah* (the holy law of Islam). Arguing that a Muslim is not simply one who recites the credo and then behaves any way he wishes, ibn Taymiyyah condemned the Mongols for violating Islam's "major injunctions concerning life and limb, property, jihad and the status of non-Muslims, the sexual code of behavior, alcoholic prohibition, gambling" (p. 97). Given the absolute imperative in Islamic law that apostasy must be punished by death, ibn Taymiyyah in effect called for the violent overthrow of Mongol rule. However, even ibn Taymiyyah cannot be read to call categorically for open rebellion against derelict Muslim rulers.

Qutb applied the analogy of the Mongols' apostasy to the Egyptian regime. He argued that the Egyptian authorities established a belief system based on the un-Islamic doctrines of Marxist and non-Marxist socialism. The Egyptian government, too, was apostate for having tortured and executed Muslims, seized their property, extended protection to non-Muslims beyond what had been permitted in the *Shari'ah,* and encouraged sexual promiscuity, alcohol consumption, and gambling.

A year after Qutb's execution, his followers interpreted Egypt's disastrous defeat in the June 1967 war with Israel as just punishment from God for the abandonment of Islam. If the 1967 defeat was seen as God's punishment, the favorable showing by Egypt's "Islamic army" in the October 1973 war was interpreted as God's approval for the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

growing advocacy of a return to true Islam among Egyptians.

In 1974, the first of a series of violent actions occurred against the Sadat government when the Islamic Liberation Organization attacked the Technical Military Academy's facilities. More radical actions occurred in 1977, when the Minister of Religious Endowments was kidnapped and then murdered. Sadat's confrontations with Islamic groups over his trip to Israel later that year, his endorsement of the Camp David Accords in 1978, his signing of the peace treaty with Israel in 1979, and his resulting struggles with radical Islamic groups between 1979–81 have already been mentioned.

Sadat's assassination might be interpreted as the victory of a unified Islamic radical opposition. But this view would be wrong, given the fissiparous nature of the opposition groups. Sivan shows that they disagreed over the restoration of the caliphate—the institution of rule in the Islamic world that was abolished by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1924. The leaders of two Egyptian groups, the Islamic Liberation Organization and the Repentence and Emigration (Takfir wa al-Hijrah), have attacked each other, and one of them even called the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood an agent of the Freemasons! And when al-Jihad, another radical group, led riots in Minya, Egypt, shortly after Sadat's assassination, the new government easily suppressed these disturbances.

But Sivan does argue that the radical Islamic discourse has become culturally dominant, even if the groups are fragmented organizationally. Consequently, although Sivan maintains that radical groups are not necessarily about to seize power in various Islamic countries (to which Munson would add his emphatic agreement), he argues that it is the radical *agenda* that is being discussed. And the common denominator of all radical groups is that they believe Islam to be in imminent and mortal danger and can only be saved by an uncompromising, rapid, and, ultimately, violent change of course to implement the *Shari'ah*.

IF WE examine the kind of people who are attracted to the radical cause, it may come as a surprise to learn that they are mainly young persons with high levels of education. Also unexpected, a great many of these highly educated individuals are specialists in the sciences, medicine, agronomy, engineering, etc. In terms of class origins, however, no generalization seems to fit all cases. In Egypt, for example, preliminary evidence tends to show that the radicals hail from the professional bureaucratic intelligentsia and the middle class.[5] In Iran, the evidence is also preliminary but would seem to suggest that the revolutionary Muslims are from the traditional lower middle class and artisanry—that is, merchants and small shopkeepers. In both cases, the prevalence of students or those who have recently graduated from institutions of higher education is notable. In his work, Roy substantiates this evidence because his Afghan Islamists are the young, urban-based, and relatively better-educated professionals who wish to redeem Islamic values in the face of the infidel regime and alien Soviet occupying army. The industrial proletariat is notably absent from these ranks.

This information, although preliminary, suggests that the Western theory of modernization requires extensive modification.[6] The theory holds that as secularization of culture and differentiation of social structure occur because of urbanization, industrialization, increased media consumption, and other factors, elites will emerge who will be the bearers of the symbols of modernization. Typically these elites arise from the better-educated, upwardly mobile specialists in the scientific and technical fields. By contrast, according to modernization theory, the bearers of traditional values—especially the values of religion—will become increasingly isolated and eventually disappear. The result will be Western-style social and economic development.

We see, however, that many educated Muslims trained in modern methods of science reject modernization based on the Western model. True, as Munson argues, many highly educated young people disagree with the Islamic groups' total rejection of Western-style modernization. Yet, modernization theory's prediction of a linear evolution in Third World countries toward Western-style modernity has clearly been proved wrong.

Still, one must not unduly emphasize distinctions between the West and the Islamic countries. For example, despite its colonial history, Afghanistan came under Western influence much later than did Turkey, Egypt, Syria, or Iran. For this reason, the impact of industrialization, urbanization, increasing litera-

[5]Although no data exists for the 1970's and 1980's, historically communist parties in the Middle East have drawn their members from national minorities, such as the Armenians, Jews, Copts, and Kurds. Industrial workers were fairly well-represented also, particularly oil workers in Iran. Writers, doctors, and journalists—in short, professionals—have also been important, especially in leadership positions.

[6]For recent efforts to vindicate modernization theory, see Alex Inkeles and David Smith, *Becoming Modern*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1974; Gabriel Almond and G. Bingham Powell, *Comparative Politics: System, Process, Policy*, 2nd ed., Boston, Little, Brown, and Co., 1978; and Almond and Powell, Eds., *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*, Glenview, IL, Scott, Foresman, and Co., 1988.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cy, mass media consumption, and other factors was delayed. Thus, Roy is no doubt correct to detect some signs of quickened modernization in the paradoxical situation of a country involved in massive civil war.

Moreover, not all the Islamic radical groups in the Middle East reject modernization per se. Khomeini and Qutb, for example, were quite ready to use modern instruments, processes, and methods of organization to promote the *Shari'ah*. But the radical Islamic groups are not always consistent, and sometimes modern tools or methods have been used to suppress Muslims. For example, Khomeini was willing, during the Iran–Iraq War, to maintain an alliance with the Syrian Baathists, even though his commitment to Islam should have led him to see in Hafiz al-Assad's Alawite regime a variant of *jahili* Islam. For the Alawites deify Ali, the first Shi'ite Imam and the son-in-law and cousin of the prophet, as an incarnation of God. In the view of radicals such as Khomeini, this clear blasphemy is compounded by the Alawites' belief that their founder, Abu Shu'ayb Muhammad ibn Nusayr al-Numayri (d. 883), was a prophet, an arrant violation of the Islamic doctrine of the finality of Muhammad's prophecy. Ironically, whereas the 10th, 11th, and 12th Shi'ite Imams all repudiated these doctrines and cursed ibn Nusayr centuries ago, the Khomeini regime, which alleges to be following the teachings of the Imams, has seen fit to support a regime not only adhering to those doctrines, but suppressing Muslims. Worse still, the Assad regime has flaunted its Baathist ideology, which is so clearly influenced by Marxist and non-Marxist socialist ideology.

THE works under review show that the impact of the Iranian revolution and Islamic radicalism in Islamic countries, with the exception of Lebanon, has been rather muted. To be sure, Saudi Arabia's Shi'ite population rebelled in November 1979 and February 1980. In addition, the impact of the Iranian revolution has been felt in Bahrain and Kuwait, as well as in Iraq and among Shi'ites in Pakistan. However, thus far no general movement in favor of an Iranian-type Islamic republic has occurred. And even in Lebanon, the Amal and Hizbullah Shi'ites have split over the issue of Iranian influence in that country.

Although one cannot predict the impact of Ayatollah Khomeini's death on the prospects for Islamic radicalism, its demise is unlikely. As has been noted above, Islamic radicalism antedated Iranian developments, and although it has received significant stimulation from the latter, its roots may be traced to more general social, economic, and cultural factors in Islamic countries.

In any case, Shi'ism is not a readily acceptable model for most militant Muslims. Khomeini himself sought to overcome the Sunnite-Shi'ite differences by constantly referring to his movement as Islamic, not Shi'ite, and accusing Western observers of artificially stressing the distinctions between the two branches. In this vein, Khomeini's death will probably result in a decline of Iranian influence in the Gulf and in Lebanon. But one thing is virtually certain: young Shi'ite clergymen have been radicalized in unprecedented ways and will try to carry on Khomeini's legacy of confrontation with non-Islamic secular regimes. Their ability to do so successfully, however, will no doubt be attenuated by the absence of any individual among them with Khomeini's towering stature.

Despite the limited impact of the Iranian revolution and Islamic radicalism, as Sivan points out, radicals in Iran and elsewhere have made a "crucial contribution . . . based on a triad: the diagnosis—modernity as *jahiliyyah;* the cure—rebellion (first internal, then external); the means for administering that cure—the *tali'ah* (vanguard) of the True Believers organized as a counter-society" (p. 186). But the counter-society can only triumph if the radicals are able to persuade other Muslims to join it. And in that regard, the building of a counter-society may depend, as Sivan says, as much on the mistakes of the enemies of Islamic radicalism as on the Islamic radicals themselves, whose actions have proved less than successful.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Religion and Nationalism in Soviet Central Asia

William Fierman

SHIRIN AKINER. *Islamic Peoples of the Soviet Union.* New York, Routledge, Chapman, and Hall, 1987.

ALEXANDRE BENNIGSEN and S. ENDERS WIMBUSH. *Muslims of the Soviet Empire.* New York, St. Martin's Press, 1986.

MARTHA BRILL OLCOTT. *The Kazakhs.* Stanford, CA, Hoover Institution Press, 1987.

MURIEL ATKIN. *The Subtlest Battle: Islam in Soviet Tajikistan.* Philadelphia, Foreign Policy Research Institute, 1989.

UNTIL the advent of *glasnost',* Soviet Muslims had refrained from open Islamic practices that fell outside the purview of the Soviet government. They were very aware of the hostility of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) toward Islam and of the harsh consequences for those who openly resisted party policies in this regard. The regime's aversion to Islam has stemmed from both an antipathy to religion in general and the fear that Islam might unite Muslims in opposition to Soviet rule in particular.

Although they approach the issue from very different perspectives, all of the books under review enrich our understanding of the challenges that Islam and the Muslim peoples have posed to Russian rule in both the tsarist and Soviet periods. They shed light on such fundamental questions as the nature of Islam in the USSR, the complex identities of Islamic peoples, and the ways in which these identities have affected and in turn have been influenced by social and political developments.

Two of the works (that by Shirin Akiner and that by Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush) are primarily handbooks on the various Muslim groups living in the Soviet Union. In addition to furnishing background on Soviet Muslims as a whole, Akiner discusses each Muslim group individually, including those not officially recognized as "nationalities." Akiner provides historical information and a description of the religious life of each group, as well as information on language and (where available) demographic data from Soviet censuses. The statistics are extremely useful, but some of Akiner's generalizations reflect a lack of knowledge of Soviet reality. For example, she provides no sense of the problems that plague education in most Muslim areas and make it generally inferior to what is available elsewhere in the USSR. In Central Asia, schools are much more likely than their counterparts in European areas of the country to lack laboratories, indoor plumbing, sports facilities, etc. Teachers also tend to be poorly trained; and children are more likely to spend a substantial part of the school day occupied with agricultural work.

Bennigsen and Wimbush introduce their book with a broad discussion of issues relevant to all Soviet Muslims, and then devote the remainder of their work to individual Muslim peoples. Many of the demographic statistics in the Akiner volume are also available in the Bennigsen/Wimbush volume; however, the latter furnishes more data directly relating to Islam as a religion. For example, it provides lists of tombs that are objects of holy pilgrimages and the names of active mosques. Bennigsen and Wimbush also present information on the clans and tribes that constitute the larger Muslim nationalities.

The other two books are each devoted to individual nationalities inhabiting Soviet Central Asia. Martha Brill Olcott's work is broad in scope,

---

William Fierman is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Tennessee (Knoxville, TN). He has written extensively on the politics of language and culture in Central Asia, as well as the socialization of Central Asian youth.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

examining, among other things, Kazakh history and the economic transformation of Kazakhstan. Her discussion of Islam and Soviet policy toward it are a part of her broader discussion of the ways in which contact with Russia transformed Kazakh life. She also devotes much attention to the roles of the political and cultural elites in Kazakhstan during the last 70 years.

In her short monograph, Muriel Atkin focuses on the nature of Islam in Tajikistan, the republic whose inhabitants have the most direct linguistic and ethnic bonds with the populations of Afghanistan and Iran. Among other issues, Atkin discusses the relevance of foreign stimuli to the current state of Islam in Soviet Central Asia. On this point she concludes that "influence from abroad has strikingly little importance in Tajikistan" (p. 43).

ALTHOUGH it is true that Soviet dealings with Islam have reflected the party's more general antipathy toward religion (also apparent in its policy toward Orthodoxy), policy toward Islam has been different for at least two reasons. First, throughout the Soviet period, the Russian-dominated CPSU leadership has had fairly extensive contact with Orthodox believers and therefore has known something first hand about "the enemy." Policy toward Islam has been informed by much less direct experience. Second, from the perspective of Russian Orthodox believers, the onslaught against their religion has come primarily from members of their own nationality. In the case of Islam, however, many believers have perceived that outsiders, primarily Russians, have played a central role in promoting, if not in implementing, an anti-religious policy.

All the books under review offer evidence that attests to the crudity of the Russian (and Soviet) understanding of Islam. As Alexandre Bennigsen and Marie Broxup argued in an earlier work, the primary difference "between measures adopted by the government of St. Petersburg and those of the Soviets lies in the latter's much greater brutality."[1] Commenting on the tsarist regime's failure in the 19th century to realize that Islam was embedded in the life of the Kazakhs, Olcott observes that "Russians seem to have understood conversion as some sort of mass baptism ceremony" (p. 103). Akiner notes "an uncanny resemblance" between the anti-Muslim textbooks produced by Orthodox missionaries and Soviet works on the same theme published nearly a century later (p. 10). Atkin also points out the continuing lack of subtlety in the Soviet approach to Islam, noting that atheistic propaganda in Tajikistan has generally been superficial, consisting of hackneyed slogans about the harm of religion (pp. 50–51). The figures presented by Bennigsen and Wimbush on the enormous amount of anti-religious literature published in the 1970's and 1980's also suggest that in the Brezhnev era the CPSU was more concerned with the quantity of its atheist propaganda efforts than their quality.

All of these authors agree that despite anti-religious propaganda, Islam continues to display great strength in the Soviet Union.[2] The different authors also concur that the close links between Islam and national identity and the crucial role of the traditional family environment in socialization largely account for Islam's strength. The authors generally agree that what is termed "official Islam," i.e., religious observances that take place with the formal approval of the four Islamic religious directorates in the USSR,[3] plays a secondary role in the religious life of Central Asian Muslims.

Today Moscow seems to have realized that some of its past policies were counterproductive and has provided more relaxed guidelines. Thus, the regime has allowed the opening of new mosques and has permitted others to be used again for religious purposes. In addition, articles have been published that recognize a historically positive role for Islam, and the government has openly discussed the possibility of allowing publication of the Koran. However, it remains to be seen whether most local officials will follow these new policies.

Perhaps as part of this more sophisticated approach, in recent months the Soviet regime has attempted to infuse "official" Islam with greater legitimacy. One of the most remarkable steps in this direction was the removal of the mufti of the Muslim Religious Directorate for Central Asia and Kazakhstan in response to the February 1989 popular demonstrations in Tashkent that demanded his ouster. Not only was the new mufti elected a deputy to the Congress of People's Deputies, but the Soviet press has given prominent coverage to his role in the attempts to end the violence between Uzbeks and Meskhetians in the Fergana Valley.[4]

THE BOOKS under review give very different assessments of the nature and degree of the challenge that "unofficial Islam" poses to the Soviet regime. According to Atkin, unof-

[1]Alexandre Benningsen and Marie Broxup, *The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1983, pp. 26–27.

[2]Benningsen and Broxup have noted that even the most dedicated communists observe the "three essential Muslim rites" of "circumcision, religious marriage, and religious burial in Muslim cemeteries." Ibid., p. 143.

[3]The four directorates govern official Islamic activities in Central Asia and Kazakhstan, the North Caucasus and Daghestan, Transcaucasia, and European Russia and Siberia, respectively.

[4]*Pravda Vostoka* (Tashkent), June 6, 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ficial Islam "encompasses varieties of popular religion that have evolved among ordinary believers" and often includes "elements of earlier religions that survived by becoming in some fashion Islamic." The book by Bennigsen and Wimbush is the most categorical in its evaluation of unofficial Islam. These two authors argue that the Sufi brotherhoods, which developed between the 11th and 15th centuries around the teachings or "way" (*tariqa*) of a Sufi pious man of outstanding personality, exercise "a deep influence on public opinion" and are "responsible for the high proportion of practicing believers" in the Muslim areas of the Soviet Union (p. 23).[5]

By contrast, Atkin's description of the state of Islam in Tajikistan today stresses the importance of nominally obedient but insular behavior. Atkin sees such phenomena as the observance of rituals in the home and the creation of unofficial mosques as major sources of Islam's resilience. Indeed, these practices resemble a policy adopted by 19th-century Muslim religious leaders in Kazakhstan. According to Olcott, Kazakh mullahs simply ignored Russian colonial laws that required religious institutions to have hard-to-obtain approval from civilian authorities and opened "secret mosques" (p. 102).[6]

Atkin does not believe that such practices necessarily incline Muslims to resist Soviet authorities (p. 17). Moreover, in contrast to Bennigsen and Wimbush, Atkin doubts "that Sufism plays, or can play, a powerful political role in Tajikistan or elsewhere in the USSR" (p. 27). She bases her skepticism on the lack of an organized and integrated Sufi structure in that republic, the varied connotations Sufism carries for its adherents, and the fact that for many adherents, Sufi practices have nothing to do with politics. Atkin also argues that the political potential of Sufi Islam is further limited by the fact that the kind of tight organization denoted by the word *tariqa* "rarely exists in practice" (p. 22).

For her part, Akiner finds the available information on Sufism in the USSR "patchy, inconclusive, and sometimes contradictory." Indeed, she claims that "there is no information at all" about intellectual Sufism, and therefore "it is impossible even to hazard a guess" about how it has fared (p. 8). Perhaps new information about the orders that is appearing as a result of *glasnost'* will allow more definitive answers about the actual and potential political role of Sufism.

ANOTHER significant disagreement that divides the authors of the works under review concerns the degree of unity among Muslim peoples of the USSR. This question, of course, directly addresses the nature of the "Islamic challenge" in the Soviet Union today. All of the authors, at least implicitly, recognize that Muslims of the USSR have overlapping identities. Most of these works discuss, in addition to Islamic identity, a Turkic identity, a "Turkestani" identity, various "nationality" identities, clan or tribal identities, and local geographical (e.g., oasis or valley) identities.

Olcott points out that in the first years after the Revolution, the Bolsheviks miscalculated badly in their assumption that class consciousness overrode all other identities. In 1928, when the young regime attempted to confiscate the livestock of the Kazakh *bais* (wealthy notables), Moscow counted on the support of the "exploited" Kazakhs; however, this support failed to materialize because "the Kazakh masses did not see themselves as oppressed by their leaders and so saw the attack on the *bais* as an attack on themselves" (p. 169).

Although all of these authors would probably agree that the Bolsheviks overestimated the significance of class identity among most if not all of the Muslim peoples of the USSR in the 1920's, they disagree on fundamental questions about the significance of other identities, the relation of one to another, and the role of the Soviet regime in fostering several of them. Akiner states that "unlike Muslim populations in most other countries," the Soviet Muslim population does not "have a corporate identity," but "is formed of a great number of separate elements that have no direct links with one another" (p. 4). By contrast, Benningsen and Wimbush see the broader identities (especially the one linking the "'Umma"[7] both within the USSR and abroad) as the most important.

The CPSU has attempted to use political and cultural institutions in the union republics to create separate national identities as a means of undermining pan-Islamic, pan-Turkic, and Turkestani identities, and to cut the links between Soviet Muslims and their brethren abroad. Olcott seemingly testifies to some party success in this regard when she provides significant evidence illustrating the uniqueness of the Kazakhs' identity. However, the roots of this distinctiveness in fact lie deep in Kazakh history. Olcott suggests that the traditionally no-

[5]Bennigsen and Broxup termed this kind of phenomenon a "radical-conservative" response to Russian and Soviet "infidel" rule. Benningsen and Broxup, op. cit., p. 73.

[6]Benningsen and Broxup label this as a "moderate conservative" reaction. They point to some ways in which today's Muslim community still protects itself from "contamination" and assimilation by "isolating itself from the alien Russians," but they maintain that for the most part this kind of response disappeared in the early 20th century. Ibid., pp. 73, 86.

[7]The worldwide community of Muslims.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

madic Kazakhs look at the world in a way quite different from their sedentary Uzbek and Tajik fellow Muslims to the south. Aside from the nomadic Kazakhs' traditional way of life, she highlights their relatively incomplete conversion to Islam and their longer history of contact with the Russians, who conquered them in the 16th century. Consequently, even those early-20th-century Kazakh intellectuals who were attracted to Pan-Turkism "were also committed to the idea that the practice of Islam should adhere to Kazakh cultural needs, rather than the reverse . . ." (p. 117).

Many other non-Kazakh Central Asian intellectuals, especially those who resented what they perceived to be Tatar dominance, were also cautious in their support of Pan-Turkism. One might surmise that even without the communists' divisive "help," these differences might well have produced a Central Asia lacking political unity.

In the same vein, Olcott shows that various segments of Central Asian Muslim society seriously disagreed with each other over important social, economic, and religious issues. For example, when the Kazakh elite called a meeting in Ural'sk in the spring of 1917 with hopes of seizing government and economic management from Russian control, the clerics who attended initially refused to be seated because women were present; and when the women were reseated further away, the clerics then "balked at having to speak with the Western-dressed secular elite, whom they deemed indecently clad" (pp. 132–33).

Similar examples of serious discord in the early years after the Revolution could be cited from other parts of Central Asia as well. One Uzbek who caused considerable controversy was the early-20th-century poet Batu. (Batu disappeared in 1930 and perished during the purges later in that decade.) For all his "nationalism" as a Muslim communist, Batu in 1921 split with other members of the Uzbek intelligentsia on important issues. As early as 1921, he urged that the Uzbek language should discard the Arabic alphabet in favor of the Latin script. In addition, Batu became a member of the Organizational Bureau of Uzbekistan's Union of the Godless (*Soyuz Bezbozhnikov*) after it was established in 1928.

Given such serious national and ideological discord, it is impossible to determine whether any form of Islamic, Turkic, or Turkestani unity could have been achieved even in the 1920's, had the Russians not interfered. In addition, as Olcott shows, historically the Russians have had little difficulty in finding "collaborators" among the local population. In the 19th century, for example, the tsarist regime was able to allocate and assign pasture land to a largely unwilling Kazakh population thanks to the cooperation of most Kazakh administrative *aul* and *volost'* officials.

When the Bolsheviks formed the Central Asian republics, they, too, found Muslims who were willing to collaborate with them. Early in the Soviet period, some who collaborated with the Soviet regime came from wealthy merchant families, such as the first chairman of Uzbekistan's Council of People's Commissars, Fayzulla Khodzhayev. These people worked with the Bolsheviks because of their opposition to the old order. As time passed, the regime came to seek out people from poorer backgrounds. Thus, the first *Uzbek* first secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, Akmal Ikramov, came from the family of a poor teacher. Later, the collaborators tended to come from even poorer, more proletarian families.

Paradoxically, although Marxist-Leninist ideology is a universalist creed dedicated to overcoming narrow, particularist loyalties, under Soviet power it has been the CPSU that in many ways has fostered the traditional tribalism and clannishness of Muslims among its political cadres. Certainly a great deal of evidence during the rule of such Central Asian Soviet leaders as Dinmukhamed Kunayev or Sharaf Rashidov points to the vitality of these "subnational" identities.[8]

Other evidence indicates the salience of provincial identities for non-party members. Although these identities may still be unimportant for those who remain in their home villages and towns and hence have no occasion to reflect on the ways in which their particular group is different from or less privileged than others, for those who go to the cities and encounter "outsiders," these more provincial identities are very significant, and possibly of growing importance. For example, Uzbek students in Tashkent's higher educational institutions prefer housing with students from their own region, and serious clashes have occurred among youths from different parts of the republic. Muslims of different nationalities are even more likely to be aware of their differences, and under certain circumstances their relations become antagonistic. Although the Uzbek and Meskhetian communities both consider themselves members of the 'Umma, in June 1989, mobs of Uzbeks attacked Meskhetians. Significantly, the latter appealed to Moscow for help.

ALTHOUGH the Central Asians are not united, Islam may nevertheless pose a "threat" to Moscow. More-

[8]Many of Rashidov's relatives and fellow-countrymen from Dzhizak were removed from their posts in disgrace following their patron's death.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

over, this threat may exist whether or not the Sufi *tariqas* are as widespread and active as Bennigsen and Wimbush maintain. The threat may even exist regardless of whether Islam presently serves as the most important source of identity for Soviet Muslims. Islam has survived as an integral part of the identity of the vast majority of the Soviet "Muslim nationality" population and so remains a potential rallying point and a foundation for a sense of solidarity for Muslim peoples who may be bound by other economic, social, and political interests. Moreover, on the same pattern as the *jadid* reform so evident in the early 20th century,[9] Islam today continues to demonstrate a remarkable ability to adapt to a changing world. This adaptability is evident, for example, in an Uzbek-language *samizdat* booklet on Islam that circulated in Tashkent in the spring of 1988. On its cover, along with the outline of a mosque, are sketches of high voltage electrical lines, a modern city, and even a rocket.

For demographic reasons, the confluence of Islamic identity with economic, social, and political problems is more likely on a large scale in Central Asia than in the Caucasus or along the Volga. Islam is likely to serve as one of the important bonds providing what Karl W. Deutsch calls complementary habits of communication.[10] Linguistic factors are also likely to be very important here, because the vast majority of the indigenous population of Central Asia speaks some form of Turkic. (One important exception is the Tajiks, who speak a dialect of Persian.)

It is noteworthy in this regard that a number of recent signs point to the fact that Moscow is now willing to permit and even to encourage a degree of regional integration in Central Asia, something that was unimaginable even two or three years ago. One of the latest indications of this new policy was a February 1989 regional conference devoted to economic problems of the five Central Asian republics.[11] In addition to discussing economic integration, this meeting also brought up questions about the cultural life of the region's population. The more frequent and intense contacts that are bound to emerge from such meetings seem likely to make Central Asian Muslims more aware of their common predicament. One of the conclusions they may reach is that many of their shared problems result from the excessive concentration of authority in the Russian-dominated party and government in Moscow. Central Asian Muslims may begin to see their historical feuds and divisions in a new light and, as a result, jointly seek to make the central authorities take greater cognizance of "Muslim," or at least regional, interests.

A potent symbol of excessive intervention by Moscow and one of the most serious ecological issues confronting Central Asia today is the Aral Sea tragedy. During the last 25 years, this body of water has retreated 70–80 kilometers from its banks and thus has lost one-third of its surface area. Consequently, the climate of the region is perceptibly and dramatically changing, various harmful substances from the bottom of the sea are becoming airborne and carried far away by the wind, and the fishing economy that once thrived in the Karakalpak region has precipitously declined.

To be sure, common cultural, political, and economic factors may not necessarily reinforce Muslim unity today any more than they did in the 1920's. In this vein, the water crisis caused by the Aral Sea disaster has apparently exacerbated some of the historical tensions between the Uzbeks and the Turkmens. But it is at least plausible that the gravity of this crisis facing Central Asia's Muslim peoples could lead to greater regional consolidation, with the emergence of more common interests that differ from Moscow's, and the emergence of demands that local leaders may be able to meet only through greater unity. The perception of a common fate may be greatly reinforced by Islam. It is in this context that Islam seems most likely to challenge Soviet power in the decades to come.

[9]The *jadids* were Muslim reformers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries who sought to adapt traditional Islamic education to meet modern needs.

[10]Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, MA, The MIT Press, 1966, p. 96.

[11]*Pravda Vostoka*, Feb. 24, 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Urbanization and the Origins of Ethnic Unrest in Imperial Russia

Joan Neuberger

PATRICIA HERLIHY. *Odessa. A History. 1794–1914.* Cambridge, MA, Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute Monograph Series, 1986.

MICHAEL F. HAMM, Ed. *The City in Late Imperial Russia.* Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 1986.

WITH bloody clashes between nationalities regularly dominating news from the Soviet Union, it has become clear that the "nationality question" will be a key element in determining the success of President Mikhail Gorbachev's reform program. The roots of much of this ethnic unrest can be traced back to the decades immediately preceding the Bolshevik Revolution, when nationality conflict also contributed to the destabilization of the central Russian state.

Anti-Russian nationalism and tension among the non-Russian minorities on the country's periphery began to mount in the period following the Great Reform Era of the 1860's, erupted into violence in times of political strain after 1881, and culminated during the revolutionary era beginning in 1905. But although general histories of the period usually mention the importance of discontent among national minorities, full-scale studies of the relationship between ethnicity and other trends in late imperial history are only now beginning to appear. Indeed, neither Patricia Herlihy in her book, nor the nine contributors to Michael F. Hamm's collection explicitly set out to address questions of ethnicity in their studies of urbanization. Taken individually, each of these works presents important new research on a range of social and political problems connected with urban development and revolution in the Russian empire. Taken together, however, the works under review demonstrate the importance of ethnic problems and the significance of the periphery.

In her survey of the economic and social history of Odessa, Herlihy provides a wealth of useful raw material on ethnic relations in that city, as do essays in the Hamm collection by Frederick W. Skinner on Odessa and Hamm's own essay on Kiev. In essays on Warsaw by Stephen D. Corrsin, on Riga by Anders Henriksson, on Tiflis by Ronald Grigor Suny, and on Baku by Audrey Altstadt-Mirhadi—all in the Hamm collection—ethnicity forms the skeleton on which the main issues of urbanization and revolution hang. In the past, scholars divided the major conflicts in tsarist Russia into two related categories: the political conflict between state and society and the class conflict between privileged and unprivileged social groups. Shifting attention from the empire's center to its periphery not only adds cultural conflict as another source of instability, it highlights the peaceful development that already existed in Russia's cities.[1]

A STRIKING refrain in all these works is the relatively peaceful coexistence of urban ethnic groups prior to the last decades of the 19th century. Only Odessa witnessed significant ethnic violence—in the form of anti-Jewish pogroms—before the Great Reform Era, and that violence was sporadic and unusual even within the Jewish Pale. This concord began to break down for

Joan Neuberger teaches Russian History at Lafayette College (Easton, PA). Her research is on Imperial Russian culture. She is completing a book entitled Hooliganism: Crime, Culture, and Politics in St. Petersburg, *and she is preparing a new study of popular legal cultures in late Imperial Russia.*

[1]The excellent contributions in the Hamm collection by James H. Bater on St. Petersburg and by Joseph Bradley on Moscow will only be briefly mentioned here because the absence of significant numbers of national minorities in the imperial capitals removes them from the center of this essay.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

different reasons in different cities only in the last half of the century.

When discontent surfaced, it generally took two basic forms: conflict among local ethnic groups, and conflict between local groups and the central Russian authorities. Ethnic conflict usually arose as a result of changes wrought by urbanization. Some changes were economic, such as demographic shifts, the rise and decline of economic elites, new kinds of economic activities, new relationships between people in the workplace, and new forms of economic competition. Still other changes were clearly political: city economies attracted workers, and workers attracted radical intellectuals, who in turn helped workers formulate political programs to redress their grievances. Cities were also the home to universities and other magnets for intellectual discourse, which fostered the development of nationalism.

These economic, political, and intellectual conflicts were aggravated by cultural differences. Language, religion, custom, and ideas divided ethnic groups from one another and from the Russian authorities, and these factors separated classes as well. It was the interaction of ethnicity and class, of economics, politics, ideas, and culture, that made urban ethnic tensions so intractable.

The authors of the works under review all take the economics of urbanization as their point of departure. In each case, ethnic tension developed between groups whose fortunes changed as a result of economic development and consequent demographic shifts. Elites who dominated economic life at the beginning of the 19th century witnessed the rise of new middle classes of different ethnic composition. In Odessa, the Greeks and Italians who had controlled shipping in that Black Sea port during the first half of the century dwindled to a tiny minority of the population, while the Jewish role in the port grew rapidly. In Riga, the old German merchant elite that had run the city's local government and its main businesses saw the rise of a new Latvian bourgeoisie and the appearance of Latvian professionals and intellectuals. In Tiflis, which had an Armenian majority, the Georgian nobility declined in number and power as the Armenian bourgeoisie rose; but the Armenian population was also declining in proportion to the growing number of Georgian migrants from the countryside. In Baku, the old Azeri economic elite continued to own most of the urban property but did not participate in the development of the booming oil industry, which was primarily the work of new Armenian migrants.

Relations between the bourgeoisie and the working class were also complicated by the presence of different ethnic groups. In his article in the Hamm collection, Suny addresses the links between ethnicity and class by noting that when Georgian peasants migrated to Tiflis in search of work, they quickly discovered a far greater disparity of wealth than they had known in the village, and they also found that although they spoke the same language as their fellow workers, their bosses spoke Armenian, lived in separate Armenian neighborhoods, and enjoyed privileges that identified them with the Russian authorities.

Ethnic differences also led to conflict within the proletariat. Everywhere, economic growth attracted lower-class migrants who formed an ethnically diverse corps of skilled and unskilled workers at a time when competition for jobs was sharpening. The number of Russian workers on the periphery was growing in the late 19th century. In some cities, such as Baku, resentment toward Russian political authorities was reinforced within the working classes by Russian workers' preponderance in the skilled and better-paid occupations. The Russian population (administrators and policemen, as well as workers) was almost universally described as arrogant, ignorant, and contemptuous of non-Russian peoples.

This complex fragmentation of urban society, with loyalties crisscrossing ethnic and class cleavages, involved people in various forms of conflict: at times against local class enemies, at times against local ethnic enemies, and at times against the state, which outside of central Russia was, of course, both a political power and an ethnic outsider. Among elites, conflict usually was confined to political or intellectual arenas; among the lower classes, tension erupted into physical violence during periods of political discontent.

Working people in cities also had new economic and social grievances that were aggravated by ethnic differences, and that were not ameliorated by education or peaceful forms of expression. Cooperation among workers from different ethnic groups often disintegrated into ethnic conflict and violence. But conflict in the multi-ethnic city could also evolve into cooperation on other issues. Even in Baku (a city whose ethno-religious conflict was described in the late 19th century as resembling that between Jews and Poles in Warsaw), Azeris were known to cooperate with Armenians against the Russian authorities. For a time, Russians allied with Latvians in Riga to help break the German hold on local power. In all the cities on the periphery, workers usually hostile to one another could form temporary alliances against their employers. In fact, Herlihy, Hamm, and Skinner each deemphasize ethnic conflict in Kiev and Odessa. They argue that po-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

groms were sporadic, although certainly horrific, events, and emphasize labor conflict rather than national strife.

WHAT requires clarification here are the specific ways in which ethnicity complicated responses to industrialization and urbanization.[2] Urban life highlighted cultural conflicts: differences among what Suny calls forms of "social communication," that is, language and religion, but also including the more amorphous elements of culture, such as shared codes of public behavior, traditional family structures and roles, and new ideas and attitudes, all appeared in sharper focus in cities. Culture divided people more than neighborhood or even occupation. It also created conflict between classes that shared the same ethnic background. As both Joseph Bradley and James H. Bater show in their essays on Moscow and St. Petersburg in the Hamm collection, economic stratification and social mobility transformed families, customs, and values, even dividing those who spoke one language or shared a common religious faith.[3] Common economic or political interests were not enough to bridge the gap between different ethnic groups. It was cultural conflict that kept the hostilities of the revolutionary period smoldering after the flames died down, and it is culture that, in large part, feeds the economic and political tension afflicting the Soviet periphery today.[4]

Conflicts rooted in the social and economic interaction of everyday life were intensified by the development of nationalist ideologies that, as elsewhere in Europe, began as intellectual, rather than mass pursuits. Nationalism was intrinsically an urban creation. The city's economic development along with political and cultural opportunities created during the Great Reform Era encouraged the growth of intellectual and professional groups and supported new forms of communication and new institutions for the development of national cultures. Riga, for example, was a German island in a Latvian sea, but urbanization made it the center of Latvian culture. Until Riga's growth as an urban center, Latvian culture meant only folk and village culture. In the late 19th century, educated Latvians developed a distinctive literary and political culture in the capital, which underlay the growth of nationalism there.

When ethnic groups came into contact with each other in urban institutions, old barriers were broken down but new ones were erected. Universities in Kiev and Odessa were sites of both assimilation and segregation. Interaction made students aware of the cultural chasms separating ethnic groups, but over time the students discovered similarities as well, especially when they organized political movements against the tsarist government in the name of the people.

The press was a critical instrument in the development of urban ethnic relations—a point noted by almost all the authors here—but it was a double-edged sword. Urban newspapers both spread enlightenment and whipped up hatred. They facilitated organized expression of minority cultures, making people more conscious of their differences even while providing information encouraging familiarity with other peoples. In Warsaw, Kiev, and Baku, newspapers published calls for ethnic harmony and calls for bloody revenge.

Thus, the role of the urban environment in igniting ethnic unrest is ambiguous. Cities brought diverse people together and gave them common interests, but interaction also made people conscious of their differences.

BECAUSE urban social and economic conditions produced both conflict and accommodation, a natural question about the role of the state arises: was state policy responsible for the breakdown of ethnic coexistence? Herlihy and Skinner both blame the shortsighted and suspicious autocracy for Odessa's problems, but they are alone in attributing such influence to central state power. Corrsin explicitly rejects Polish historians' emphasis on the politics of the Russian state in explaining tensions between Jews and Poles. Daniel R. Brower, in his essay in the Hamm collection, dismisses statist explanations as too narrow. Nevertheless, each author provides examples of state policies that crudely and stupidly aggravated existing tensions.

Herlihy, Hendriksson, Altstadt-Mirhadi, and Suny all note that central policy-makers were wary of situations in which national minorities wielded local power and that they made efforts to limit that power. The Imperial Russian government also

[2]New research by Charters Wynn on the Donbass and Robert Weinberg on Odessa goes a long way towards elucidating this point and others raised in this essay; see Charters Wynn, "Russian Labor in Revolution and Reaction: The Donbass Working Class, 1870–1905," Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1987; and Robert Weinberg, "Worker Organizations and Politics in the Revolution of 1905 in Odessa," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1985.

[3]The issue of cultural conflict is further developed in their books; see Joseph Bradley, *Muzhik and Muscovite: Urbanization in Late Imperial Russia*, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1985; and James Bater, *St. Petersburg: Industrialization and Change*, Montreal, McGill University Press, 1976. Cultural conflict is explicitly treated in Joan Neuberger, "Stories of the Street: Hooliganism in the St. Petersburg Popular Press," *Slavic Review* (Austin, TX), Summer 1989, pp. 177–94.

[4]See John A. Armstrong, "The Future of Eastern Europe," *Problems of Communism* (Washington, DC), March-June 1989, pp. 121–26.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

displayed its arrogance and insensitivity on many occasions, such as the sudden levying of new taxes in Tiflis in 1865, which united Georgians and Armenians across ethnic *and* class lines against Russian authorities. However, the attempted Russification of local culture, especially in education, remains one of the most glaring, myopic miscalculations of imperial Russian rule. In Riga, not only did the Russification of the schools destroy local enthusiasm for school development and halt the further growth of schools, it also failed to increase educational attendance among the Russian population. And, of course, the autocracy's indifference to the urban poor and blindness to the causes of radicalization further contributed to ethnic hostilities.

In the cities examined in the books under review, it fell to the elected local government, the city council (*gorodskaya duma*), to find a balance between state and society and between competing social needs, while providing leadership in developing the city's economy. If the most striking feature of urban life to emerge from these works is the importance of ethnic relations, certainly a close second, and a bigger surprise, is the vitality and activism of the local city councils. In these cities, including Moscow, the city council became a center of civic activity. St. Petersburg, whose city council was unusually lethargic, was the only exception. Despite the fact that only a tiny proportion of the population possessed the property needed to vote and despite the efforts of the autocracy to circumscribe the powers and limit the resources of the city councils, they became foci for both local ethnic pride and ethnic tension.

Elections to the city councils inflamed ethnic tensions partly because they signaled the shifting fortunes of local ethnic groups. For example, the city council in Baku was controlled by Muslim Azeris giving them an important instrument of local authority in the face of growing Armenian financial power and imperial Russia's administrative power. Moreover, elections to city councils in Kiev, Tiflis, and Riga often revolved around ethnic issues. In Tiflis, the old Georgian noble elite fought for control of the council against the newer Armenian bourgeoisie. In Riga, the growing Latvian middle class resented the German stranglehold on what Latvians believed should be their own local government. Warsaw, denied a city council after the 1863 uprising, saw similar ethnic tensions erupt between Jews and Poles in the elections to the State Duma in 1906 and 1907. The effect of these elections was to carve out a space for public discussion of civic problems and allow freer expression of common and opposing interests. In multinational cities, elections produced polarization along ethnic lines as they gave nascent nationalist groups issues to rally around.

Yet, even where city councils were dominated by one ethnic group, the economic development programs they initiated did not discriminate against other nationalities. Class interests were a more important factor in determining the the pattern of urban development. Each of these cities embarked on major projects to develop city centers and financial services that benefited the middle classes, while water, health, housing, and sanitation in poor working-class districts were neglected.

In cities where workers associated authority with a different ethnic group, local politics reinforced class distinctions. Moreover, to some extent, city council projects that might have benefited the poor, especially in the non-Russian periphery, were hindered by the suspicion and obstructionism of the central Russian government. But in at least one city, Kiev, xenophobia on the part of local elites was responsible for sapping city council energies and deflecting attention from pressing social problems.

THE links between elite and mass ethnic tensions and between class and ethnicity become even more complex beginning in 1905.[5] The ethnic violence that had punctuated urban life since the anti-Jewish pogroms of 1881 culminated in the ethnic bloodshed of the 1905–07 Revolution. Suny, Altstadt-Mirhadi, and Corrsin address some of the issues, but their treatment is understandably brief, given space limitations and the complexity of the issue. Nevertheless, these works reveal the variety of ethnic unrest during the 1905–07 Revolution and the supreme difficulty of accounting for all of it. To some extent, ethnic minorities shared the Russian majority's discontent over the absence of civil and political rights and the lack of economic justice. Consequently, in some cities, socialist activists were able to unite members of rival ethnic groups in the common struggle against the tsar.

In each city, however, ethnic cleavages created additional tension and produced extreme solutions. Political parties of all stripes participated in the urban revolutions in each of these cities, and everywhere the existence of nationalist parties (radical and reactionary) intensified local radicalism, sharpened local ethnic tensions, and produced a variety of hybrid parties. Altstadt-Mirhadi shows how radical agitators in Baku aroused

[5]Wynn, op cit., and Weinberg, op. cit., both treat the problems of ethnicity and class in 1905. See also Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Baku Commune 1917–1918: Class and Nationalitv in the Russian Revolution*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1972.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

working-class anger but then could not prevent workers from attacking the "wrong" targets, a phenomenon that occurred in other cities as well.

The plethora of radical and nationalist parties produced some surprising alliances. In Tiflis, when violence between Azeris and Armenians threatened to get out of control, the embattled Russian government called on Georgian Social Democrats to mobilize Georgian workers to help prevent bloodshed. The admixture of national liberationism in Georgian Marxism gave that movement its special potency and appeal. The ability of Muslim socialists in Baku to accomodate Islamic practices within Marxism accounted for its success there.

In the cities throughout the empire's periphery, the ethnic conflict of the 1905–07 Revolution left a bitter residue. Violent incidents demonstrated the extreme virulence of local ethnic hostility and cemented anti-Russian sentiment in the borderlands. This deadly combination boded ill for the future multi-ethnic Soviet state.

THIS brief examination of urban ethnic problems in late imperial Russia shows the existence of intertwined centrifugal and centripetal forces. I have focused on the similarities in patterns of nationalist development and ethnic unrest to emphasize the importance of ethnicity as a distinct category of analysis, critical for understanding both the local and the national sources of conflict in the Russian empire. But major differences distinguish the ethnic histories of these cities, with their various ethnic and religious populations, their various patterns of economic development, and their various relations with the central Russian state. These issues are all rich veins for further research.

Today, of course, 70 years of Soviet socialism and nationality policy have created new problems that contribute to unrest among the USSR's non-Russian minorities. But the origins of many of these ethnic conflicts, as well as historical lessons in the Russian state's inability to deal with them, can be found in prerevolutionary cities. These urban histories serve as a provocative introduction to the subject, and a reminder of the importance of the periphery for understanding the Soviet Union as a whole. The Hamm collection is an especially useful book, whose rich essays (and bibliographic notes following each essay) ought to encourage further work in this vital field.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Focusing on the Ukrainian Famine of 1932-33

Jaroslaw Bilocerkowycz

MIRON DOLOT. *Execution by Hunger: The Hidden Holocaust.* New York, W. W. Norton & Co., 1985.

ROBERT CONQUEST. *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine,* New York, Oxford University Press, 1986.

EWALD AMMENDE. *Human Life in Russia.* London, Allen & Unwin, 1936, reprinted by John Zubal, Cleveland, OH, 1984.

THE COMMISSION ON THE UKRAINE FAMINE. *Report to Congress. Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine, 1932–1933.* Washington, DC, 1988.

MARCO CARYNNYK, LUBOMYR LUCIUK, and BOHDAN KORDAN, Eds. *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932–1933.* Kingston, Ontario, Limestone Press, 1988.

JAMES MACE. *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation: National Communism in Soviet Ukraine, 1918–1933.* Cambridge, MA, Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1983.

A PROFOUND human tragedy involving the loss of millions of lives, the Ukrainian famine of 1932–33 had until recently received little scholarly or popular attention. As Robert Conquest argues in *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine,* it had failed to register in Western consciousness. Similarly, George Orwell wrote several decades ago that "huge events like the Ukraine famine of 1933, involving the death of millions of people, have actually escaped the attention of the majority of English russophiles."[1] Since Soviet authorities had persistently denied the very occurrence of a famine, not to speak of it being brought about by a deliberate policy, many Westerners doubted the historicity of this event.

Today, however, the famine is an acknowledged fact, and has received much attention. There have been a number of books written about it—as attested to by the six books under review here.[2] The recent attention given to the famine can be attributed to several factors. Commemorations in 1983 of the 50th anniversary of the famine by Ukrainian communities in the United States, Canada, and other Western countries received wide media coverage and sparked the interest of Sovietologists and elected officials. For example, the US Congress passed legislation in 1984 to establish a commission to study the famine—what caused it and how Americans responded to it. Also, the declassification of US and European governmental documents —particularly diplomatic reports concerning the famine—offered scholars a wealth of new material to peruse and analyze. The resurgence of interest—both in the West and the Soviet Union—in the Stalin period, as well as the tragedy of a famine in Africa, generated addi-

Jaroslaw Bilocerkowycz is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Dayton, Ohio, and author of Soviet Ukrainian Dissent: A Study of Political Alienation *(1988).*

[1]Quoted in Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow,* p. 321.

[2]Two other useful books on the Ukrainian famine are: Roman Serbyn and Bohdan Krawchenko, Eds., *Famine in Ukraine,* Edmonton, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1986; and Wasyl Hryshko, *The Ukrainian Holocaust of 1933,* translated by Marco Carynnyk, Toronto, Bahriany Foundation, 1983. There have also been a number of shorter monographs published: for example, Olexa Woropay, *The Ninth Circle,* Harvard University Ukrainian Studies Fund, 1983; and Roma Hadzewycz, George Zarycky, and Marta Kolomayets, Eds., *The Great Famine in Ukraine: The Unknown Holocaust,* Jersey City, NJ, Ukrainian National Association, 1983.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tional concern with the subject.

THE BOOKS under review here fall into five categories: (1) a memoir (Dolot); (2) two detailed studies of the Ukrainian famine (Conquest; Ammende); (3) a congressional report (The Commission on the Ukraine Famine); (4) an annotated collection of documents from the British Foreign Service archives concerning the famine (Carynnyk, Luciuk, and Kordan, Eds.); and (5) an examination of historical and political developments—including the famine—in Ukraine, during the 1920's and early 1930's (Mace).

Miron Dolot's *Execution by Hunger: The Hidden Holocaust* is a poignant personal account of the impact that forced collectivization and the famine had on the author's family, which had lived in a village of some 4,000 people located 100 miles south of Kiev. The author writes under a pen name, which suggests he feared retaliation by the authorities against members of his family still living in the Soviet Union. Dolot had written the first 24 chapters of his memoir back in 1953, but he did not complete the book's final six chapters until 1983. Perhaps the emotional difficulty of reliving such a personal trauma played a large part in delaying his completion of the manuscript. To the author's credit, he writes in a straightforward and unassuming style, without excessive emotionalism. This only heightens the poignancy of his story about the devastating and horrific experiences of his family. "Looking back to those events now," writes Dolot, "it seems to me that I lived in some kind of a wicked fantasy world. . . . It is simply too difficult to associate all those happenings with real life in a normal human society" (p. 140).

Robert Conquest's *The Harvest of Sorrow* is a very thorough and well-documented study of the famine by a prominent Sovietologist. It is a seminal work on the topic. Conquest provides a first-rate analysis of political and historical events leading to the famine. In addition, he presents an eminently lucid discussion of the various economic factors behind the famine, factors once deemed by experts to be the sole causes of the tragedy. When discussing the famine's causes and consequences, Conquest rejects a posture of "moral neutrality" (p. 10), and advocates instead that a scholar's objective analysis of historical events need not preclude his expression of personal views of, and moral objections to, those events.

Ewald Ammende's *Human Life in Russia,* first published in 1936 and reprinted in 1984, is written from the viewpoint of an international relief official and activist, who had long been involved in national minority issues. For 10 years, Ammende served as secretary general of the European Congress of Nationalities, a body that monitored fulfillment of post–World War I treaty obligations affecting national minorities. A Baltic German by background, Ammende had gone to the Soviet Union in 1934—after the famine had already run its course—in the capacity of secretary of the Interconfessional and International Relief Committee. His discussion of the difficulties he encountered when trying to render international humanitarian assistance to Ukraine through the League of Nations is particularly enlightening. However, Ammende is imprecise at times, for example when he describes Ukraine "as a purely agricultural region" (p. 113) or refers to a "Russian" famine. Also, the book's translation is problematic in certain places.

The book-length report of the Commission on the Ukraine Famine (CUF), entitled *Report to Congress: Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine, 1932–1933,* was undertaken for the purpose of increasing "the world's knowledge of the famine," examining contemporary US reaction to it, and disseminating information and findings concerning the famine to US governmental bodies, universities and libraries, the media, and the general public. James Mace, author of one of the books under review here, served as the commission's staff director.[3] The CUF held public hearings in six American cities to gather testimony from famine eyewitnesses, most of whom were 7–15 years of age at the time of the tragic event.

The CUF report provides documentation on the response of the US government to the famine in detail not found elsewhere. It concludes that "the American government had ample and timely information about the Famine but failed to take any steps which might have ameliorated the situation" (p. xxiii). The commission's conclusion is of considerable importance because it represents an official acknowledgment of the famine tragedy and of US inaction.

The report also provides an excellent review of literature on the famine, including academic and journalistic works. However, the book is especially valuable in providing a thorough review of Soviet literature on the famine. The review begins with the post-Stalin period, when references to the famine were oblique, Aesopian, or defensive, and ends in early 1988, by which time the Soviet press, under the stimulus of *glasnost'*, was no longer denying the famine, even if it still was not placing blame for this tragedy squarely on party policies.

The CUF report notes that the

[3]Mace is also author of "Famine and Nationalism in Soviet Ukraine," *Problems of Communism* (Washington, DC), May-June 1984, pp. 37–50.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

growth of Western scholarship on the subject has played a positive role in stimulating greater Soviet coverage of the tragedy. Still, Soviet publications have not as yet fully and candidly addressed the famine, its causes, and its geographic scope. The report does well, therefore, to include the often neglected Ukrainian-language émigré literature on the subject, such as Mykola Kovalevs'kyi's *Ukrayina pid chervonym yarmom: dokumenty i fakty* (Ukraine under the Red Yoke: Documents and Facts, Warsaw-L'viv, "Skhid," 1937) and Semen Pidhaynyi's *Ukrayins'ka inteligentsiya na Solovkakh* (The Ukrainian Intelligentsia in the Solovky, n.c., Prometei, 1947). Finally, the appendices to the report provide 10 detailed oral histories by famine survivors and eyewitnesses (whose accounts are part of a larger effort involving some 200 oral histories), as well as accounts by various Italian diplomatic and consular reports dealing with the famine.

The compendium of documents, *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932–1933*, edited by Marco Carynnyk, Lubomyr Luciuk, and Bohdan Kordan, provides contemporary British Foreign Office reports concerning the famine. These reports include analyses by British embassy and consular officials stationed in Moscow and elsewhere in the USSR, and accounts sent to the British Embassy in the Soviet Union or passed on to the British Foreign Office by trade experts, journalists, non-British diplomats, and relief organizations.

The materials are particularly enlightening on the impact of international politics on the famine, and especially on the United Kingdom's diplomatic and trade relations with the USSR (Britain was one of the first to establish such relations). The reports by Canadian wheat expert Andrew Cairns in particular reveal how aware British officials were of famine conditions in Ukraine, and how keen they were on suppressing public knowledge of these conditions in order to preserve British trade with the USSR.

The British government's lack of support for and discouragement of organized relief activities by private groups is also well-documented in the volume. Furthermore, several documents provide insightful commentary on such controversial public figures as Walter Duranty, correspondent of *The New York Times*, and French statesman Edouard Herriot—two men who played a major role in shaping Western opinion on the famine. Duranty and Herriot denied and dismissed the existence of famine in Ukraine (more on this below). The compendium is preceded by an extensive and useful introduction by the editors and a detailed map showing famine mortality by region.

James Mace's *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation: National Communism in Soviet Ukraine* is a very readable and solid study of events in Ukraine during the 1920's and early 1930's. A revised dissertation, this book examines Ukrainian efforts at national self-assertion in the political, economic, and social-cultural spheres during the Ukrainization period of the 1920's, and the response of Soviet authorities to these challenges. The coverage given to collectivization and the famine itself is modest. The famine is treated in the context of Soviet attempts to extirpate Ukrainian national consciousness.

A NUMBER of important issues surround the subject of the famine in Ukraine. What were the causes of this human tragedy? Was it due to a drought, a sub par grain crop, and kulak sabotage as Soviet authorities have variously maintained? Or, was it a man-made famine stemming from policy decisions and their implementation? If the famine was the result of policy decisions, what were the authorities' motives? And what role did economic, political, and ethnic factors play in those decisions? Was the famine directed at peasants in general, or were certain non-Russian peasants—the Ukrainians in particular—singled out? Was there geographic specificity to the famine, and how can that be explained? How many lives were lost in the famine? Was Stalin aware of the horrific conditions in the countryside, and does he bear personal responsibility for the Ukrainian famine? How did the international community and media respond to the famine, and why? Finally, has *glasnost'* changed the official Soviet position on the famine, and what, if anything, are Ukrainian intellectuals doing about this issue?

The authors of the reviewed volumes show a marked degree of intellectual consensus on many of these major issues, although their works have different emphases. Foremost, they agree that the famine was linked to changes in the Soviet nationality policy. Their conclusions challenge those of scholars who subscribe to a more purely socio-economic interpretation and maintain that massive famine was not a deliberate objective of Stalinist policy, nor was it directed at select nationalities as such.[4]

The importance of both ethno-political and economic considerations is weighed heavily by Conquest in his book. He concludes that the

[4]Two examples of scholars whose approach to the famine might be said to emphasize a socio-economic interpretation are Alec Nove and Stephen Wheatcroft. See Nove, *Stalinism and After: The Road to Gorbachev*, 3rd ed., Boston, Unwin Hyman, 1989, pp. 45–46; and Wheatcroft, "Correspondence: Ukrainian Famine," *Problems of Communism*, March-April 1985, pp. 132–34.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

famine "was accompanied by a wide-ranging attack on all Ukrainian cultural and intellectual centers and leaders, and on the Ukrainian churches" (p. 4). Thus he views the tragedy as part of Stalin's concerted assault on the large and unsubmissive Ukrainian nation.

According to Conquest, Soviet agricultural policy during the 1920's and early 1930's consisted of three phases—namely, dekulakization, collectivization, and "the terror-famine." While the first two phases were set into motion throughout the Soviet Union, the last one was aimed particularly at Ukraine.

The official rationale for the first phase, dekulakization, was to eliminate the prosperous peasants known as "kulaks" because they were "exploiters." The Soviet regime needed the bogey of kulaks in the countryside to better mobilize its party activists into class warfare. Moreover, this group of peasants presented a threat to the regime, since it was assumed correctly that the kulaks could mobilize a peasant resistance to collectivization. By 1929, however, the term kulak (*kurkul* in Ukrainian) had lost all meaning. Anyone owning a cow, a horse, or a few acres could be labeled a kulak and therefore a class enemy. Ironically, "the average kulak's income was lower than that of the average rural official who was persecuting him as a representative of a wealthy class" (Conquest, p. 118). Any peasant who displayed religious convictions or opposed Soviet rule—regardless of how poor he was—could also be singled out as a kulak, and thus be subject to arrest, deportation, and confiscation of property.

Rapid and forcible collectivization of agriculture, the second phase, was begun in 1929. It served the regime's ideological goal of building a socialist economy with its presumed economies of scale and ability to make better use of mechanization. According to Conquest, even more important for the Soviet leadership was that collectivization allowed the state to quickly gain effective control over agricultural output.

Collectivization was opposed by the peasants, a fact that is well illustrated in Dolot's book. Describing the feelings of one Ukrainian peasant family, Dolot writes: "The Shosts had survived many wars and foreign occupations on the same piece of land. They had grown up on the land. . . . they always thought of this farm as their home. Asking farmer Shost for his land was like asking for his very life" (p. 134).

Resistance to collectivization took many forms—from militant to passive. Some farmers used axes or clubs to physically resist collectivization. In several cases entire villages or districts rebelled en masse; in those instances, the authorities called on regular military troops to put down the peasant unrest. Often, peasants chose to slaughter their livestock rather than to surrender it to the collective farm. This caused severe shortages of horses, cows, and other animals in the USSR for some time.[5] There occurred the so-called women's rebellions (*babski bunty*), in which peasant women armed with clubs resisted collectivization measures, and at times had temporary success. It was hoped that by using women to resist collectivization, military intervention could be avoided.

Governmental pressure on and intimidation of peasants to join collective farms or else face arrest, deportation, and exorbitant taxes ultimately proved decisive. According to Conquest, by mid-1932, 70 percent of Ukrainian peasants were collectivized (p. 220).

The third phase, the terror-famine, merged Soviet economic interests with Soviet ethno-political interests. Exorbitant extractions of grain from Ukrainian peasants were already giving Soviet authorities much of the necessary food supplies to feed industrial workers and the urban population. They were also providing grain for export to generate foreign currency to help the concurrent industrialization drive. The Soviets were using this currency to acquire from the West much-needed industrial machinery. In 1932, Soviet authorities decided to go a step further in Ukraine, beyond grain requisitions and on to extraction of all foodstuffs. They hoped thereby to decimate the independent-minded Ukrainian peasantry, cow it into submission, and thus weaken this important social base of Ukrainian nationhood.

Agents of the regime searched peasant homes and dug up gardens, looking for hidden caches of food. According to Dolot, they even shot domestic pets and birds nesting on rooftops (p. 152–53). People began dying in large numbers. In some cases whole villages perished. As Conquest comments ironically, "it aroused suspicion not to be in a starving state" (p. 231).

As the famine raged, people began in desperation to eat whatever they could find—even other human beings. Dolot explains that his family survived by hiding food where authorities would be unlikely to look: in sand dunes located on government land that lay adjacent to their property, in roof thatching, and in tree hollows. He observes that "this hoard was our only means of existence. . . . Those potatoes and that grain were the greatest treasure that was ever hidden" (p.170).

[5]For statistics on the sharp decline in numbers of horses and livestock in the Soviet Union during the 1928–33 period, see Zhores Medvedev, *Soviet Agriculture*, New York, W. W. Norton, 1987, p. 85.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ukraine was not the sole region to be affected by the famine; the North Caucasus and the lower Volga suffered as well. However, as the CUF report notes, the grain quotas and measures Stalin introduced in Ukraine in the fall of 1932 and January 1933 were particularly harsh (see below). The invasiveness of these interventions were "paralleled only in the ethnically Ukrainian Kuban region of the North Caucasus" (p. xix). It is worth noting that all three regions were populated primarily by non-Russians who refused to fully subordinate themselves to the Soviet regime. The famine did not affect the agricultural areas of central Russia, and indeed, Russian villages across the border from Ukrainian settlements had adequate food supplies. As Conquest notes, Stalin believed "the nationality problem is, in its very essence, a problem of the peasantry" (p. 219). He thereby targeted the nationally conscious non-Russian peasants for starvation.

Mace argues that Stalin's assault on the Ukrainian peasantry was part of a wider campaign against the Ukrainian nation, including the intelligentsia and nationally conscious communists. The arrest in late 1929 of several thousand people alleged to belong to the nonexistent Union for the Liberation of Ukraine (SVU) initiated this assault. Implicated as leaders were 45 Ukrainians, mostly intellectuals, who were put on trial in 1930. They "were charged with treason and were accused of having links to various organizations such as the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences." The charge that important Ukrainian cultural and academic institutions harbored enemies of the state led to the repression of these organizations and "laid the groundwork for massive purges of Ukrainians in various organizations during the mid- and late 1930's."[6]

According to Mace, "the SVU trial was in part a response to rural resistance to collectivization of agriculture in Ukraine, a way of preventing nation-wide organization of such resistance, by cowing the sole group capable of leading it, the national intelligentsia" (pp. 275–76). Mace argues that the Ukrainization policy of the 1920's led to "a national cultural rebirth of unprecedented depth and breadth." It legitimized national consciousness within the Ukrainian Communist Party, causing the key leaders to demand "that Ukrainization lead to real national liberation, and that meant ending Russian domination" (p. 304). Stalin opposed these demands through centralization and Russification. Through the famine he was able to subordinate the Ukrainian party to Moscow's control: leaders of the Ukrainian party were criticized and purged on the pretext of not fulfilling grain quotas and/or being lax in fighting "hostile elements."

In the midst of famine and the cultural attack against Ukrainians in 1933, demoralized Ukrainian leaders such as Mykola Skrypnyk, the Commissar of Education and de facto party leader of Ukraine, and Mykola Khvylovyi, a prominent writer, committed suicide. Skrypnyk had been demoted and denounced in the aftermath of Stalin's assignment in January 1933 of Pavel Postyshev, a Russian, to be Ukraine's de facto party ruler.

It is interesting to note that even Ammende discerned a link between the famine and the Soviet nationality policy toward Ukraine. However, he failed to understand the true nature of that relationship. Thus, at one point he wrote: "a determined fight against the nationalities, their rights and their cultural individuality, has been carried on for some time. This struggle, too, may be regarded as, to a certain extent, a consequence of the famine" (p. 104). Ammende thus confused cause and effect; rather than seeing the famine as a Soviet response to the national liberation struggle, he viewed it more as a cause of that struggle.

THE DESTRUCTION in terms of human lives wrought by the famine was enormous. Lacking full access to Soviet archives, Western scholars and Soviet citizens are not able to calculate definitively the number of famine (or other Stalin-era) victims. Informed estimates of human losses, however, are both possible and necessary to convey the scale of this tragedy. These estimates derive from numerous demographic sources—available official and unofficial census data, assumptions and projections of "normal" mortality and fertility rates, calculations of ethnic assimilation—as well as from general estimates of famine mortality provided by Soviet officials or dissidents.[7]

The CUF report cites a range of scholarly estimates of famine deaths at between 3 and 8 million, although the commission itself opted not to undertake an independent demographic analysis of famine mortality, given the inherent problems and limitations of calculating such an estimate (p. ix). Conquest estimates that 7 million people died in the famine, including 3 million

[6]Jaroslaw Bilocerkowycz, *Soviet Ukrainian Dissent: A Study of Political Alienation*, Westview Press, Boulder, CO, 1988, p. 19.

[7]For a discussion and debate on calculating famine and other mortality figures, see the exchanges between Stephen Wheatcroft and James Mace, "Correspondence: Ukrainian Famine," *Problems of Communism*, March-April 1985, pp. 132–38; and the ongoing discussion involving Stephen Wheatcroft, Stephen Rosefielde, Barbara Anderson, Brian Silver, and Robert Conquest in *Slavic Review* (Austin, TX), Fall 1985, pp. 505–36, and Summer 1986, pp. 295–313.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

children, mostly young infants (pp. 297, 306). His territorial and ethnic breakdown of famine mortality is as follows: 5 million Ukrainians from Ukraine, 1 million Ukrainians living in the North Caucasus, and another 1 million non-Ukrainians. According to Conquest, the Ukrainian republic lost at the time 18.8 percent of its population. (p. 306).

Given the extent of the decimation of the Ukrainian population, a number of the authors conclude that Stalin's actions against the Ukrainians qualify as genocide. Mace, for example, writes: "Genocide is not too strong a word for what was done to the Ukrainians. . . . the attempt was made to break them, to destroy their culture, to decimate them through famine" (p. 300). The CUF argues that: "One or more of the actions specified in the Genocide Convention was taken against the Ukrainians in order to destroy a substantial part of the Ukrainian people and thus to neutralize them politically in the Soviet Union" (p. xxiii). Conquest states: "It certainly appears that a charge of genocide lies against the Soviet Union for its actions in the Ukraine" (p. 272).

DID STALIN knowingly and deliberately instigate the famine in Ukraine, and should he be held personally responsible for the crime? There are scholars who question whether the Soviet leader really knew what was going on in the countryside and doubt that he deliberately used mass starvation as a political tool. For example, British economic historian Alec Nove writes:

It is sometimes said that Stalin deliberately starved the peasants into submission. This would not be quite fair. He faced resistance from the peasants, he thought that they were deliberately withholding supplies, the needs of the towns and of export were pressing. So he pressed. . . . Perhaps he thought the peasants had secret stocks and would survive. . . . After 1928 Stalin never visited villages, and may not have known the horrors that were being inflicted on peasants in certain areas.[8]

Nevertheless, Nove states that Stalin is personally responsible for "those millions of deaths" which "were the consequences of his policy, and it was on his orders that ruthlessness became standard procedure."[9]

By contrast, Conquest, Mace, and the Commission on the Ukraine Famine hold that Stalin knew of the famine, used it as an ethno-political instrument to weaken the Ukrainians, and should be held personally accountable for it. Complaints concerning excess grain seizures from Ukrainian officials were common, and party and military officials—for example, Roman Terekhov, party chief of the Kharkiv oblast—informed Stalin about famine conditions in Ukraine. The Soviet leader also had a powerful secret police that reported to the dictator on major problems throughout society. Certainly the fact that Stalin instituted an official ban on travel by Western reporters to the famine areas indicates that he felt that there was something there to hide.

Not only was Stalin fully cognizant of a famine in Ukraine, but he refused to alleviate famine conditions and even intensified them by mandating "actions which worsened the situation and maximized the loss of life (CUF, p. xvi). No food aid from other areas of the USSR was allowed to be organized; international assistance was refused, and the authorities angrily denied the very existence of a famine in Ukraine. Peasants were prevented by means of a blockade from going for relief to the Russian Republic. Additionally, a new passport system was instituted in late 1932 to limit peasant mobility. Those who managed to reach Russia clandestinely had any food they brought back with them to Ukraine confiscated at the border. A decree "On Safeguarding State Property," drafted by Stalin, made the stealing of grain a capital offense, and guards were placed in watchtowers to "protect" collective farm fields from peasant raiders. Clearly, beyond the economics of excess grain seizures, Stalin used the terror-famine as an ethno-political weapon. That he used this weapon against the Ukrainians is not surprising given Stalin's Ukrainophobia, which has been noted by, among others, Andrey Sakharov (Conquest, p. 217) and Nikita Khrushchev.[10]

MOST of the authors agree that the media's generally poor coverage of the famine left the West largely unaware of it. Several reporters, such as Malcolm Muggeridge of the *Manchester Guardian* and and W. H. Chamberlain of *The Christian Science Monitor*, reported the famine despite such obstacles as official restrictions on travel to the famine areas, the threat of loss of Soviet authorities' favor, and disbelief and controversy in the West over the accuracy of their reportage. Others, such as Walter Duranty of *The New*

[8]Alec Nove, *Stalinism and After . . .*, p. 45.
[9]Ibid.

[10]According to Khrushchev, Stalin considered a mass deportation of the Ukrainian nation to Soviet Asia as punishment for the anti-Soviet orientation of much of the Ukrainian populace during World War II. "The Ukrainians avoided meeting this fate only because there were too many of them and there was no place to deport them." See Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, Introduction by Edward Crankshaw, trans. and ed. by Strobe Talbott, Boston, Little, Brown and Co., 1970, p. 596.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

York Times, denied the famine's existence and sought to downplay and minimize it by using euphemisms like "food shortages." Yet, according to Carynnyk et al., Duranty privately informed a British diplomat that "as many as 10 million people may have died directly or indirectly from lack of food in the Soviet Union . . ." (p. 313). Duranty's career ambitions, which were advanced by currying the favor of Soviet authorities, and his strong support for US diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union help explain his biased reporting. In return for his positive coverage of the USSR , Duranty received various forms of preferential treatment from Soviet authorities. He was granted a rare interview with Stalin; was the first Western reporter allowed into the famine areas after the ban on official travel there was lifted; and was an honored guest at celebrations of the establishment of US-Soviet ties.

After one series of more objective reports about the famine, Duranty was reproached by Soviet officials for his "unfaithfulness" and warned about serious consequences for himself—such as expulsion from the Soviet Union (Carynnyk et al., pp. 209–10). Thereafter, Duranty reverted to his more compliant and uncritical approach to the USSR. Ironically, as Conquest points out, Duranty won a Pulitzer Prize in 1932 for his "dispassionate, interpretative reporting of news from Russia" (p. 320). The Pulitzer awards committee praised Duranty for his "scholarship, profundity, impartiality, sound judgment, and exceptional clarity . . . ."[11]

As a result of the media's mixed reports, there was much uncertainty about the famine. This fueled a long-term debate in the West as to whether there ever was a famine in Ukraine.

Also contributing to the general ignorance of the famine was the unwillingness or inability of Western statesmen to explore and objectively report on the events unfolding in the Soviet Union. For example, Carynnyk et al. describe how Edouard Herriot, a parliamentary leader and former Prime Minister of France, visited Ukraine in August 1933 and was given a Potemkin-village-style tour, with which he was satisfied. Herriot spent five days in Ukraine attending "banquets, receptions, and inspections arranged in his honour," all "in exact accordance with a time-table worked out by the uthorities beforehand" (Ammende, pp. 252, 224). The cities he visited received extra food rations, people were issued clothes, and "undesirable" elements were removed from view (Carynnyk et al., p. 301). Subsequently, Herriot asserted that "reports of famine in the Ukraine were gross libels" (ibid., p. 302) and "denounced all talk of famine as Nazi propaganda" (ibid., p. xxxiii). British diplomats found Herriot to be "surprisingly gullible" (ibid. p. 302).

Yet, for their part, British officials and diplomats sought to downplay the Ukrainian famine publicly for political and economic reasons. As one diplomat stated: ". . . we have a certain amount of information about famine conditions in the south of Russia. . . . We do not want to make it public, however, because the Soviet Government would resent it and our relations with them would be prejudiced" (ibid., p. 397). Carynnyk et al. argue that the British Government's silence was primarily due to its desire to ensure the continuation of its trade relations with the USSR. In the early 1930's, Britain was buying nearly 40 percent of all Soviet grain exports (ibid., p. xlvii).

Of equal or greater consequence in minimizing the famine was Adolf Hilter's coming to power in Germany in January 1933. The perceived threat from Nazi Germany and the fear of fascism played a key role in shaping a more positive perception of the Soviet Union in the Western states than might otherwise have been the case.

As the CUF reports makes evident, US officials also proved unwilling to publicize the famine. When US citizens with relatives in the Soviet Union pleaded for relief assistance, they were told that "there do not appear to be any measures which this Government may appropriately take at this time in order to alleviate the sufferings of these unhappy people" (p. 162). According to Conquest, US intercession was deemed impractical by American officials given "the absence of any American state interest" (p. 311). More significant, the United States was in the process of establishing diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, and thus American officials were disinclined to deal with the famine issue.

Ammende argues that political considerations also obstructed efforts to provide Ukraine with much-needed famine relief through the League of Nations. The member countries of the League placed political, economic, and security considerations, namely, friendly relations with the USSR, above moral duty or obligation to assist the famine victims. Despite the best efforts of the President of the League Council, the Norwegian representative, the famine topic was not even discussed at an official League of Nations meeting. Subsequently, in September 1934, the USSR joined the League. In Ammende's view, the League's inaction reflected that body's "severe moral crisis" (p. 300). Had it undertaken stronger action, the League could have helped many famine victims, and, in the process, raised its own pres-

[11]Marco Carynnyk, "The Famine the '*Times*' Couldn't Find," *Commentary* (New York), November 1983, p. 32.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tige. Already by 1933, many had become disillusioned with the performance of the League of Nations. As Ammende observes, there was a conspicuous gap between the League's principles and its practices. As rhetoric replaced action, supranational cooperation was limited. And little progress could be cited in assisting national minorities, reducing tariff barriers, or ensuring international security.

TODAY, in an era of *glasnost'*, the increasingly assertive intelligentsia of Ukraine is pushing for the filling-in of "blank spots" in Soviet-Ukrainian history. Among them is the Ukrainian famine, which has become a focal point of attention. Boris Oliynyk, a secretary of the board of both the Ukrainian and USSR writers' unions, had this to say when speaking about Stalinism at the 19th CPSU Conference:

And since the persecutions began in our republic long before 1937, we should also make public the reasons for the famine of 1933, which took the lives of millions of Ukrainians, and also identify by name those who were responsible for this tragedy.[12]

Members of the Ukrainian Writers' Union, as well as of newly founded organizations such as the Ukrainian "Memorial" Society, have begun to press for official commemoration of—and the erection of a monument to—the victims of Stalin's man-made famine.[13] Even Volodymyr Shcherbyts'kyi, the hard-line leader of the Ukrainian Communist Party, has referred several times to famine conditions in Ukraine in the early 1930's (CUF report, p. 62).

Official Soviet publications such as *News from Ukraine,* published for Ukrainians living abroad, have provided some coverage of the famine, although the coverage is not always forthright. And the new *History of Ukraine*, scheduled to be published in 1990, apparently will include "a more definitive analysis of the famine."[14] More significant, Volodymyr Manyak, a writer, and Lidiya Kovalenko, a journalist, have recently completed a book on the Ukrainian famine entitled *1933 Holod* (The 1933 Famine) and have submitted it for publication to the Radians'kyi Pys'mennyk publishers in Kiev. Speaking before the Kiev regional constituent conference of the Popular Movement of Ukraine for Perebudova (*Perestroyka*) on July 1, 1989, Manyak indicated that the book was based on the "testimony of thousands of eyewitnesses and heretofore secret archives . . . ." He summarized his book's conclusions as follows:

In 1933, there was an action, carefully planned beforehand, with regard to pacifying the Ukrainian people, which has entered history under the name "famine." The main strategist, the formulator, was Stalin, and those who implemented it were the representatives of the party and soviet apparatus in the local areas.[15]

Hopefully, in the not too distant future, additional light can be shed on the subject of the famine and responsibility for it can be determined. Much will depend on whether Soviet officials will agree to open their archives more fully to scholars.[16] Certainly, recent developments in the USSR make it appear that fuller revelations concerning the famine are not entirely improbable. Until this happens, however, the famine will remain, in the words of Conquest, "in no sense part of the past but, on the contrary, a living issue . . ." (p. 347).

[12]*Pravda* (Moscow), July 2, 1988, trans. in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* (Columbus, OH), Sept. 21, 1988, p. 12.

[13]See Bohdan Nahaylo, "Ukrainian 'Memorial' Society Confronts Stalinist Heritage in Ukraine," Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty, *Report on the USSR* (Munich), Mar. 17, 1989, pp. 15–18.

[14]David Marples, "Some Interviews in the USSR," ibid., Jan. 6, 1989, p. 20.

[15]*The Ukrainian Weekly* (Jersey City, NJ), July 23, 1989, p. 2.

[16]The Ukrainian "Memorial" Society's public pressure to investigate Stalin-era repression even led the deputy head of the Kiev city party organization, Stanislav Martinyuk, to support "calls for the opening of the NKVD archives. . . ." See Nahaylo, loc. cit., p. 18.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Problems of Communism

SUBSCRIPTIONS

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS or copies of recent (the last three) issues of *Problems of Communism* may be obtained by writing to the Superintendent of Documents, US Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402-9371 (USA). Subscription blanks for one-year and single issue requests are provided on the facing page. For further information, see the inside front cover.

CURRENT PRICES: Annual subscriptions, US mailing address, $9.00 each; outside the US, $11.25 each. Single copies, US mailing address, $4.25 each; outside the US $5.31 each. A 25 percent discount is allowed on orders for 100 or more subscriptions or single copies mailed to a single address.

ENCLOSE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER, payable to "Superintendent of Documents, USGPO," or if paying by VISA or Master Charge, please indicate credit card number in the space provided on the subscription blank.

Problems of Communism

REPRINTS, MICROFILM, REPRODUCTION

A variety of services, ranging from reprints, through microfilm and microcard editions, to reproduction of individual issues or articles are commercially available. Those firms which offer one or more such services and which have come to the Editors' attention are, in alphabetical order:

Bell & Howell Micro Photo Div.
Old Mansfield Road
Wooster, OH 44691

J. S. Canner & Co.
49-65 Lansdowne Street
Boston, MA 02215

Infordata International, Inc.
175 East Delaware Place
Chicago, IL 60611

Inst. for Scientific Information
3501 Market St.
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Johnson Reprint Corporation
111 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10003

Microforms International Mktg. Co.
Fairview Park
Elmsford, NY 10523

University Microfilms
300 Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

John T. Zubal, Inc.
2969 West 25th Street
Cleveland, OH 44113

Annual indices for Volumes IV-to-date appear in the November-December issue (No. 6) for each year. A combined index to the first three volumes is contained in Vol. III, No. 6 (November-December 1954).

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED